



# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

## THESIS

**PROSPECTS FOR FINLAND AND SWEDEN TO PURSUE  
CLOSER DEFENSE COOPERATION WITH NATO**

by

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September 2016

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**PROSPECTS FOR FINLAND AND SWEDEN TO PURSUE CLOSER DEFENSE  
COOPERATION WITH NATO**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the potential advantages for Finland and Sweden in pursuing closer cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and possible membership. The security policy objectives of Finland and Sweden have largely been defensive in nature: to ensure national survival and protection of sovereignty. With the exception of Finland's opposition to the Soviet Union's aggression in 1939–1940 and 1941–1944 to defend its national independence, both countries have remained neutral in foreign and security policies. Sweden's geopolitical situation is advantageous in that the Baltic Sea hinders invasion and the country has positive relations with its immediate neighbors. In contrast, Finland shares a lengthy border with Russia and has a complex history of relations with Moscow. In 2009, Sweden pledged a Declaration of Solidarity that protects its neighboring Nordic states as well as European Union (EU) member states in an effort to strengthen and preserve peaceful relations and stability.

The thesis concludes that the benefits of closer cooperation with the Alliance and possible membership, notably collective defense protection under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, are substantial. Russia's recent aggressive behavior may lead Finland and Sweden to seek closer cooperation with NATO and to give greater attention to the option of membership.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

A2/AD	Anti-Access/Area Denial
BALTOPS	Baltic Operations
C4I	Command, Control, Communications, Computing, and Intelligence
CBR	Chemical Biological Radiological
CCDCOE	Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence
CDSP	Common Security and Defense Policy
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DDoS	Distributed Denial of Service
EC	European Community
EDA	European Defence Agency
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
EU	European Union
EU BG	European Union Battlegroups
FCMA	Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance
IEA	International Energy Agency
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISP	Internet Service Providers
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
KFOR	NATO Kosovo Force
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NORDAC	Nordic Armaments Cooperation
NORDCAPS	Nordic Cooperation Armament for Peace Support
NORDEFCE	Nordic Defence Cooperation
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PARP	Planning and Review Process
SEA	Swedish Energy Association
SECGEN	NATO Secretary General
SFNTG	Swedish Finnish Naval Task Group
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WEAG	West European Armaments Group
WWII	World War Two
YLE	Yleisradio Oy (Finnish Broadcasting Company)

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **A. IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

This thesis aims to clarify the potential advantages for Finland and Sweden to more closely cooperate with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and consider membership. The security policy objectives of Finland and Sweden have largely been defensive in nature: to ensure national survival and protection of sovereignty. With the exception of Finland's opposition to the Soviet Union's aggression in 1939–1940 and 1941–1944 to defend its national independence, both countries have remained neutral in foreign and security policies. Sweden's geopolitical situation is advantageous in that the Baltic Sea deters invaders and the country has positive relations with its immediate neighbors. In contrast, Finland shares a lengthy border with Russia and has a complex history of relations with Moscow. In 2009, Sweden pledged a Declaration of Solidarity that protects its neighboring Nordic states as well as European Union (EU) member states in an effort to strengthen and preserve peaceful relations and stability.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Since Finland and Sweden joined the European Union in 1995, many prominent scholars have published works considering the possibility of NATO membership for these two countries. These academic contributions to the subject have been written for the most part in Finnish and Swedish, while analyses in English have been more limited. For the purpose of this thesis, two works stand out as descriptive and three as analytical in providing insight into the motivations behind Finland and Sweden in considering possible closer cooperation with NATO or membership in the Alliance. This thesis builds on the scholarship on the subject by examining the advantages and disadvantages of possible enhanced cooperation or NATO membership as well as bringing the discussion up to date.

As EU members, Finland and Sweden participate in the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Some scholars hold that the Finns' primary motivation in seeking EU membership was security, while Sweden's motives were believed to be

predominantly economic and political.<sup>1</sup> In *Life-Line Lost: The Rise and Fall of “Neutral” Sweden’s Secret Reserve Option of Wartime Help from the West*, Robert Dalsjö explores the historical background of the secret Swedish ties to the Alliance during the Cold War that might shed light on the later EU membership agreements. Dalsjö notes the significance of the historical steps in Sweden’s relationship with the West to help understand policy makers’ cooperative decisions made since 1995.<sup>2</sup>

Tuomas Forsberg and Tapani Vaahtoranta, University of Tampere International Relations professor and director of *Finnish Journal of International Affairs* respectively, are the authors of “Inside the EU, Outside NATO: Paradoxes of Finland’s and Sweden’s post-neutrality.”<sup>3</sup> In this article, they emphasize the commonalities between Finland and Sweden as they pursue their relations with NATO and the EU, despite their differences in geopolitics and historical memories. The authors’ arguments assess the fluctuations in military non-alignment policy as that policy has applied to changes in the EU in relation to the external threat posed by Russia. Recent analyses of the subject contrast the context of this 2001 article with the demonstrations of Russian aggression in the subsequent years. Forsberg and Vaahtoranta forecast that future NATO membership would change the non-aligned status of the two Nordic states as well as create for both a larger “security constellation” in the North and a long border between Russia and the Alliance. According to Forsberg and Vaahtoranta, as Finnish and Swedish politicians form new links with NATO, top government leaders will undoubtedly try to sway public opinion in favor of membership.<sup>4</sup> The works of Dalsjö and Forsberg and Vaahtoranta appear at present to be the most useful descriptive works. The discussion of three analytical works follow.

National Defense University distinguished research fellow Leo Michel published a paper in 2011 in a series sponsored by the Institute for National Strategic Studies. This

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1 Tuomas Forsberg and Tapani Vaahtoranta, “Inside the EU, Outside NATO: Paradoxes of Finland’s and Sweden’s Post-neutrality,” *European Security* 10, no. 1 (2001): 71.

2 Robert Dalsjö, *Life Time Lost: The Rise and Fall of Neutral Sweden’s Secret Reserve Option of Wartime* (Stockholm: Santerus Academic Press Sweden, 2006).

3 Forsberg and Vaahtoranta, “Inside the EU, Outside NATO.”

4 Ibid., 72.



paper—*Finland, Sweden, and NATO: From ‘Virtual’ to Formal Allies?*<sup>5</sup>—is arguably the finest recent contribution to the subject of prospective NATO membership for these two Nordic countries and the most useful study of this hypothesis. Michel’s analysis interprets the strategic transformation of Finland and Sweden from “military non-aligned” states to cooperative partners with NATO by examining their political and defense establishments. In Michel’s perspective, “Given the distance that Finland and Sweden already have traveled toward recasting their security policies, transforming their militaries, and establishing close ties with the Alliance, membership might seem a logical next step.”<sup>6</sup>

In his February 2016 article, “Enhanced Defense Cooperation: New Opportunities for U.S. Engagement in the Baltic Sea Region,”<sup>7</sup> Johan Raeder references Finland’s minister of defense Carl Haglund and his Swedish counterpart Peter Hultqvist, who met in February 2015 to discuss enhancing bilateral defense cooperation between the two countries. Raeder highlights Finland’s and Sweden’s fundamentally new defense and security policy, agreed upon in 2015, that rests on the assumption that the challenges in the region will be most effectively addressed collectively.<sup>8</sup> Also, increased capability developments for Finland and Sweden will strengthen their contributions to the “UN, OSCE, EU, and NORDEFCO, including to operations under UN, EU, or NATO command, as well as to the defense of their own territories.”<sup>9</sup> Although not members of the Alliance at present, both countries see NATO as the central actor in European security and credit a strong and sustainable NATO with an increased capability to uphold Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty as a prerequisite for ensuring peace and stability in Europe.

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5 Leo G. Michel, “Sweden, Finland, and NATO: from ‘Virtual to Formal Allies?,” *National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies, and Institute for National Strategy* (February 2011), <http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo11221>.

6 Michel, “Virtual to Formal Allies?,” 18.

7 Johan Raeder, “Enhanced Defense Cooperation: New Opportunities for U.S. Engagement in the Baltic Sea Region,” *Atlantic Council* (February 2016). Johan Raeder is the former Swedish Defence Policy Director and current Defense Advisor at the Swedish Embassy in Washington, DC.

8 *Ibid.*, 2.

9 Raeder, “Enhanced Defense Cooperation,” 3.

Lastly, David Yost, professor of international relations at the Naval Postgraduate School, offers yet another review of European security issues in his book, *NATO's Balancing Act*.<sup>10</sup> His contemporary analysis of the topic dedicates a section to discussing the candidacies of Finland and Sweden as possible members of the Alliance. According to Yost, “acting in cooperation with the European Union, the NATO Allies helped to prevent the emergence of a strategic vacuum in Central and Eastern Europe. Without PfP [Partnership for Peace] and NATO enlargement, the states in this region would have been vulnerable to Russian pressures, and they would have probably renationalized their defense policies and engaged in local rivalries and power competitions.”<sup>11</sup> The enlargement of NATO has been a source of security since the Alliance’s beginnings,<sup>12</sup> and Alliance membership might well be beneficial for the prospective Nordic candidates.

### **C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This thesis investigates the prospects for closer defense cooperation between NATO and Finland and Sweden. To this end it examines the following questions:

- What factors appear likely to shape and influence decision-making between NATO and the non-NATO countries Finland and Sweden?
- If such cooperation appeared advisable to all the parties involved, what might it consist of?
- What types of cooperation would be most productive in deterrence and defense in order to protect the security interests of Finland, Sweden, and the Alliance?
- What types of cooperation might be seen as most sensitive in Russian eyes?

### **D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

For Finland and Sweden, four aspects of the debate on closer cooperation with the Alliance and possible NATO membership are noteworthy. First, the 1995 *Study on NATO*

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<sup>10</sup> David S. Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2014).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 303.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

*Enlargement* outlines an elaborate framework within that Alliance detailing the purposes and principles of enlargement. Some examples of the purposes of enlargement include: “improved security architecture in the whole of the Euro-Atlantic area,” “promoting good neighbourly relations,” and “common defence and extending its benefits.” Some examples of the principles of enlargement include members who “assume all obligations of membership,” “strengthen the Alliance’s effectiveness and cohesion,” and promise to “unite their efforts for collective defence and the preservation of peace.”<sup>13</sup> The debate in the Alliance over Finland’s and Sweden’s prospective candidacies has been minimal due to their capacity to meet the Article 10 requirements for member states. These countries have already proven their ability to “deepen their cooperation with the Alliance to the mutual satisfaction of NATO and the partners”<sup>14</sup> in the Partnership for Peace as “mature democracies.”<sup>15</sup> The main causal factor for Finland and Sweden in seeking membership would be the assurance of NATO’s collective defense obligation to protect their security interests against Moscow’s growing sphere of influence and possible aggression or coercion.<sup>16</sup>

Second, Finnish and Swedish analysts have, not surprisingly, made the largest contributions to the discussion over enhanced cooperation and possible accession to NATO in their native tongues. This causes some limitation in reliance on translated documents for research. The assortment of commentary sources should help to provide a representative mixture of alternative perspectives on the topic.

Third, Finnish and Swedish forms of government have fluctuated through many different iterations in their long histories—from authoritarian regimes to mature democratic governments. In recent history, obtaining EU membership for both countries in 1995 has been a milestone in evolving national political identity for Finland and Sweden.

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<sup>13</sup> “Study on NATO Enlargement,” NATO, September 3, 1995, par 43, [www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_24733.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_24733.htm).

<sup>14</sup> Yost, *NATO’s Balancing Act*, 302.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

Finally, the strategic and political analyses by various political experts have deeply contributed to this thesis. Strategic discourse among political leaders has taken global events affecting Nordic security into account. This thesis reviews contemporary debates in Finland and Sweden concerning improved cooperation with the Alliance and possible NATO membership.

This thesis assesses two plausible hypotheses as answers to the research questions. The first hypothesis holds that Finland and Sweden may make the conclusive decision to become members of the Alliance. Finnish and Swedish politicians, in a short successive timeframe, may justify this decision as necessary to gain security guarantees from the Alliance. These same lawmakers would seek national public support for their decisions. A decision for membership would require positive arguments from top politicians to convince and win the support of the general public.

The alternative hypothesis suggests that Finland and Sweden may continue their long-standing non-aligned status while maintaining their Western tilt, as has been evident in their participation in NATO-sponsored military exercises. The prospect of NATO membership for these two Nordic states will continue to be fraught, due to Russian declarations that such a move would be unacceptable to Moscow. This does not completely rule out a future membership in the Alliance; the Partnership for Peace activities will probably continue toward an option for membership. As the countries progress in that direction, new formulations may be created to describe Finnish and Swedish “neutral to non-alignment” policies in their post-neutrality status. As their present foreign policies indicate, new terms will surface in strategic decision-making.

The third logical possibility—Finland *or* Sweden joining NATO, and the other staying out—has been ruled out as improbable, owing to the tacit agreement of the governments of these countries to join NATO together or stay out together. According to Yost, “Finland and Sweden have nonetheless coordinated many of their activities in cooperation with NATO, and some observers speculate that Helsinki and Stockholm would act together if they decided to seek NATO membership.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act*, 300.

## **E. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This thesis utilizes draws upon historical and political science journals, as well as case studies, to characterize opposing perspectives in the NATO membership and cooperation debates in Finland and Sweden. Reports by Nordic-based journalists and political analysts portray common vantage points as well as conflicting interpretations.

Each chapter of this study relies heavily on primary and secondary historical sources. Many of the details concerning prospective NATO membership may be found in various Finnish and Swedish national political archives. Frequently cited primary sources include statements made by Nordic political and military leaders, opposing commentaries from Russian leaders, excerpts from the Lisbon Treaty (especially Article 42.7), the North Atlantic Treaty (especially Articles 5 and 10), and the 1995 *Study on NATO Enlargement*.<sup>18</sup> These primary sources are complemented by credible secondary sources analyzing the events and reactions that have shaped new security and political perspectives in Finland and Sweden.

## **F. THESIS OVERVIEW AND DRAFT CHAPTER OUTLINE**

This thesis is organized as follows: Chapter II provides historical background on Finland and Sweden to supply the reader a frame of reference for Finland's and Sweden's consideration of closer cooperation with the Alliance or possible NATO membership. This chapter covers events prior to EU membership in 1995 and afterward. Chapter III considers the potential advantages of NATO membership or closer cooperation with the Alliance for Finland and Sweden by examining improved protection of national economic resources, collective defense of the Nordic and Baltic Sea region, and cooperative deterrence to protect their respective security interests. Following the discussion of the potential advantages of NATO membership, Chapter IV discusses the possible disadvantages of NATO membership or closer cooperation. This chapter highlights the unmistakable negative Russian sentiment toward this process as well as the adverse affects of NATO enlargement, including the prospective new obligations of the potential participants. The thesis concludes by presenting a summary of the principal findings in Chapter V.

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<sup>18</sup> "Study on NATO Enlargement," par. 43.

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## **II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

This chapter provides historical background on Finland and Sweden in order to give the reader a frame of reference for their consideration of closer cooperation with the Alliance or possible NATO membership. This chapter cover events both prior to EU membership in 1995 and afterwards.

### **A. EARLY FINNISH AND SWEDISH HISTORY THROUGH WWII**

Although individualistic in their own respects, Finnish and Swedish national security policies have remained comparable throughout the modern era. Examples include their cooperative neutral stance during the Cold War and their desire for greater EU representation in modern international security. Each country's political rhetoric is echoed by that of its counterpart in regard to defense and foreign policy. Finland and Sweden agree on pursuing greater EU involvement in international security, as well as on the necessity of collaboration between themselves. Some experts believe that Sweden and Finland now have more analogous security policies than they have since 1809 when Russia seized control of Finland from Sweden.<sup>19</sup> This bilateral relationship is emphasized in public statements and other expressions of policy.

While there are many similarities between Finland and Sweden, some differences are noteworthy. Tarja Halonen, then the Finnish Foreign Minister, in 1998 rightly described Finland and Sweden as “sisters not twins.”<sup>20</sup> Some of the differences between Finland and Sweden derive from their dissimilar geopolitics. While Finland shares a border with Russia, the Swedes enjoy a buffer zone—that is, Finland. Finnish diplomat and journalist Max Jakobson offered the following perspective on the geopolitical security situation: “At the higher level Finland and Sweden are closer together than ever

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<sup>19</sup> Forsberg and Vaahtoranta, “Inside the EU, Outside NATO,” 69.

<sup>20</sup> Forsberg and Vaahtoranta, “Inside the EU, Outside NATO,” 69.

before but at the deeper level the geopolitical boundary has not vanished. Finland is still a border country, Sweden's buffer towards [the] east."<sup>21</sup>

Based on their proximate geography in relation to their Russian neighbor, Krister Wahlbäck has described Finland as the "threatened country" as opposed to the "protected" Sweden.<sup>22</sup> The Finns are more likely to perceive Russia as a genuine threat than are the Swedes. This was made evident in Finland's two wars with the USSR during WWII, whereas Sweden has remained at peace with Russia for over 200 years.<sup>23</sup> Finland fought in alignment with the Germans in WWII until signing a peace agreement, ensuring neutrality, with the Soviet Union in 1944. After WWII, Finland became more aligned with the "Scandinavian realm of domestic politics as it caught up in terms of industrialization, welfare, and living standards."<sup>24</sup> This resulted in a type of Scandinavian balance that would remain the same until the fall of the Soviet Union. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Finland and Sweden found themselves obligated to reinvent their political ties to Europe.

Sweden differs from Finland's far more recent neutrality declaration in 1944 with a neutrality policy that has kept Stockholm out of war since 1815.<sup>25</sup> Eric Einhorn, among other defense strategists, writes of a "Nordic Balance," in which "Swedish neutrality between NATO in the West and the Soviet Bloc in the East guaranteed Finnish neutrality and independence vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and permitted Denmark and Norway to pursue a strategy of lowering tensions on the northern flank of NATO by refusing to allow foreign troops or nuclear weapons on their territory."<sup>26</sup> This balance continued when one of the founding NATO members, Denmark, joined the European Economic

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21 Max Jakobson, "Suomen ja Ruotsin suhteet (Helsingin Sanomat, 1998), quoted in Forsberg and Vaahtoranta, "Inside the EU, Outside NATO," 70.

22 Krister Wahlbäck, "Uhattu maa ja sen varjeltu naapuri," (Helsingin Sanomat, 1999), quoted in Forsberg and Vaahtoranta, "Inside the EU, Outside NATO," 70.

23 Forsberg and Vaahtoranta, "Inside the EU, Outside NATO," 70.

24 Eric S. Einhorn and John Logue, "Scandinavia: Still the Middle Way?" in *Europe Today : National Politics, European Integration, and European Security*, ed, Ronald Tiersky (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 159.

25 Einhorn and Logue, "Scandinavia," 158.

26 Ibid.



Community with 63.3% of their population in favor a referendum in 1973. Since they did not want to risk compromising their respective neutrality claims, Finland and Sweden did not join the EU until 1995.

The potential for deeper security cooperation between NATO and these two Nordic states is influenced by the contemporary, domestic political attitudes of Finland and Sweden coupled with their historical experiences in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1927, the Swedish General Staff presented a defense plan for Sweden in the case of a Russian invasion of Finland. This plan would have required the Swedes to take military control of the Åland Islands, a Finnish archipelago on the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia in the Baltic Sea, to provide military aid to Finland as part of Sweden's League of Nations-approved military intervention.<sup>27</sup> An updated plan was proposed by the Swedish General Staff in 1937 to deploy a majority of the Swedish army to southeastern Finland to defend against a Soviet invasion. These two initiatives evolved into the Swedish government's Stockholm Plan of 1939, a proposal in the League of Nations to allow Finland to prepare the defense of the demilitarized group of Åland Islands in cooperation with Sweden. This plan was withdrawn in May 1939 when the Soviet foreign minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, declared that the Soviets considered the Stockholm plan a threat to their own national security.<sup>28</sup>

The Stockholm Plan, as a defense of the Åland Islands in case of Russian attack, was severely altered by the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact as well as by Russian demands for Finland. Therefore, the Swedish assistance to Finns was limited to approximately 8,000 Swedish military volunteers and their equipment, instead of a majority of the Swedish army as promised by the original Stockholm Plan, during the Winter War of 1939–1940. The Swedes represented the most significant foreign military force deployed to Finland to oppose the Soviet invasion. In this early part of World War II, Finland's refusal to surrender territory to the Soviet Union provoked a Soviet invasion of the Finnish homeland following the Soviet assault on Poland. Finnish researcher Stefan Forss

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27 Jacob Westerberg, "The New Dynamics of Nordic Defence Cooperation" in *Perspectives on European Security: STETE Yearbook 2013*, ed. Kati Lepojärvi (Helsinki: STETE, The Finnish Committee for European Security, 2014), 61.

28 Ibid.

remarks that the Soviet invasion of Finland “caught the world’s attention. The Soviet Union was condemned universally for its blatant aggression and was speedily expelled from the League of Nations.”<sup>29</sup>

Although heavily outnumbered and poorly equipped, the white-camouflaged Finnish ski soldiers resisted the Red Army tanks longer than expected. In fact, the Finnish army inflicted much larger losses on Stalin’s Red Army than the Soviet leadership had anticipated. The Finns’ stellar military performance caught the Soviets off guard. In most surprising fashion, Stalin’s reinforced onslaught against Finland was confounded by the Finnish forces. As a result, Stalin settled for peace with the Finns in the spring of 1940. The peace treaty in Moscow was a considerable success for Finland, even though the Finns lost about 12% of their territory, including the city of Vyborg. Later reports indicated that Stalin was aware of French and British deliberation about possible intervention on the Finnish side.<sup>30</sup> Stalin, having received information that Britain and France collaboratively supported Finland against Russia, decided to abstain from fighting.<sup>31</sup>

When the Nazis attacked Denmark and Norway in April 1940, Swedish Foreign Minister Rickard Sandler immediately declared Sweden’s neutrality, forcing Finland and Sweden to reshape their defense policies. The foreign minister also indicated that Sweden would not adopt the neutrality outlined in international law should a Nordic neighbor be attacked. Yet, there were no specifications as to when, or to what extent, this assistance would be invoked.<sup>32</sup> The Swedish government even indicated that it would reserve the right to examine each case individually in the case of intervention, even if that military assistance was required in a dangerous security situation on the Finnish mainland.

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29 Stefan Forss, “Russian Military Thinking and Threat Perception: A Finnish View,” *CERI Strategy Papers, Centre D’études et de Recherches Internationales (CERI-Sciences Po/CNRS)*, no. 5 (November 2009): 2, [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2314909](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2314909).

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Bo Hugemark, *Friends in Need: Towards a Swedish Strategy of Solidarity with Her Neighbours* (Stockholm: Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences, 2012), 35.

During the spring of 1940, there was some discussion of a Nordic or Swedish-Norwegian-Finnish defense union despite the threats being made by Molotov of a Soviet war of revenge against Finland. On March 30, 1940 in Stockholm the four Nordic Social-Democratic party leaders discussed the parties' possible framework. "Väinö Tanner [the Finnish Prime Minister] argued for a union, Norway's Prime Minister Nygaardsvold mostly sat silent, Denmark's Hedtoft said that his country could not be a party to something Germany disapproved of, and [Sweden's] Per Albin Hansson considered that a defence union in practice required such close integration that it must be a matter of a union of states, and this would require assurance of support from all four peoples."<sup>33</sup> This would be the first and only time the four countries' governmental leaders formally deliberated about Nordic military solidarity. Immediately after the defense union discourse, the German occupation of Norway and Denmark caused the Swedes to reiterate their previously declared neutrality.

## **B. POST WWII: INTO THE COLD WAR**

After WWII, in 1948, the new Swedish Prime Minister, Tage Erlander, presented a bold proposal for a Scandinavian defense union. It was considered especially bold because Sweden was the only Scandinavian country at the time with the military resources to support another union member if attacked. This proposal, most likely interpreted by other Nordic countries as being supportive of Swedish national interests, failed when the Norwegians chose to be one of NATO's founding members.<sup>34</sup>

Both Finland and Sweden declared neutrality during the Cold War. But it was also a period that Tuomas Forsberg has called the "golden era of Nordic cooperation."<sup>35</sup> The Nordic Council was established in 1952, a permanent treaty of Nordic cooperation was concluded in 1962, and the Nordic Council of Ministers was formed that same year. In terms of defense cooperation, the Nordic security option received some attention. Sweden and Denmark were in favor of a neutral Nordic defense alliance, whereas Norway was

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<sup>33</sup> Hugemark, *Friends in Need*, 39.

<sup>34</sup> Hugemark, *Friends in Need*, 47.

<sup>35</sup> Tuomas Forsberg, "The Rise of Nordic Defence Cooperation: A Return to Regionalism?," *International Affairs* 89, no. 5 (September 2013): 1163. doi:10.1111/1468-2346.12065.

more in favor of the Nordic alliance eventually becoming part of NATO. Since the United States refused to supply weapons to this type non-aligned alliance, the negotiations ceased, owing to a lack of credibility.<sup>36</sup> The idea of defense cooperation was strained due to the requirements of Denmark and Norway to uphold their NATO obligations while Finland and Sweden maintained their own neutral status. Nevertheless, later reports indicate that some observers perceived Sweden as a “secret member of NATO” owing to the covert coordination between Swedish defense forces and NATO in the early stages of the Cold War. The Finnish armed forces and their intelligence services also provided some clandestine support for the Alliance against the Soviet Union.<sup>37</sup>

This defense cooperation continued into the Cold War and was termed the “Nordic Balance” to describe the regional security arrangements in northern Europe. In this balance Norway and Denmark helped define NATO’s restrictive policies in response to the Soviet Union’s foreseeable interactions with Finland. It also meant that Sweden could use the Soviet Union’s perceived restraint as an excuse for not pursuing membership in NATO. However, Finland actively resisted this complex arrangement fearing it would fuel a potential Soviet argument for a Soviet military presence in Finland in response to Norway and Denmark abandoning their restrictive policies in NATO.<sup>38</sup> While this “Nordic Balance” idea was criticized in some quarters, it helped in the promotion of Nordic defense cooperation in the post-Cold War years.

### **C. POST-COLD WAR: NORDIC SECURITY AND EU MEMBERSHIP**

In an effort to boost regional security, the Nordic defense ministers held their first Nordic Council meeting in August 1997 as a two-day seminar on “Security in the Adjacent Areas.”<sup>39</sup> This revitalized Nordic cooperation helped policy-makers and experts consider regional security issues in the post-Soviet world. Various Nordic developments

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 1166.

<sup>37</sup> Mikael Holmström, *Den dolda alliansen: Sveriges hemliga NATO-förbindelser* [The Hidden Alliance: Sweden’s Secret NATO Relations] (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2011). Quoted in Forsberg, “The Rise of Nordic Defence Cooperation,” 1166.

<sup>38</sup> Erik Noreen, “The Nordic Balance: A Security Policy Concept in Theory and Practice,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 18, no. 1 (March 1983): 43–56.

<sup>39</sup> Forsberg, “The Rise of Nordic Defence Cooperation,” 1167.

preceded and paralleled the 1997 Nordic Council meeting, including: the Nordic Armaments Cooperation (NORDAC) agreement in 1994 for armament development and maintenance, the Nordic Coordinated Arrangement for Peace Support (NORDCAPS) in 1997, and the Nordic Standard Helicopter Project in 1998 to buy and use the same helicopter design among the Nordic states. The helicopter project ultimately failed due to an inability to agree on the choice between the Italian Agusta EH-101 model and the French NH 90.<sup>40</sup> A decade later, in 2008, Sweden's attempts to sell its JAS Gripen fighter jets to its Nordic neighbors also failed, due to Norwegian interest in the highly advanced, and highly expensive, American, NATO-approved F-35.<sup>41</sup>

Besides differences in military partnership in comparison with Denmark and Norway, Finland and Sweden varied in their versions of neutrality in the Cold War. Sweden was generally viewed as neutral in the West, whereas Finland was deemed "Finlandised" by some critics due to the Russian treatment of Finland, which some observers compared to the controlling relationship between a marionettist and his marionette. Finland's 1948 treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance (FCMA) with the Soviet Union created a bond that could not be broken until the USSR's dissolution in 1991.

European Union membership in 1995 helped bring Finland and Sweden into closer parity in many respects. Economic performance in particular saw significant growth. Also, Finland's decision to join the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) arguably helped propel Finnish progress as a more independent country, in contrast with its previous dependence on Sweden for military and economic security.<sup>42</sup> The EU membership was monumental for both neutral countries as they had now committed themselves to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

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40 Forsberg, "The Rise of Nordic Defence Cooperation," 1168.

41 Marco Weiss and Alex Wilner, "The Next Generation Fighter Club: How Shifting Markets Will Shape Canada's F-35 Debate," *Canadian Military Journal* 12, no. 2 (Spring 2012): <http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vol12/no2/18-wilner-eng.asp>.

42 Forsberg and Vaahtoranta, "Inside the EU, Outside NATO," 71.

As was desired in previous Nordic partnerships, Finland and Sweden finally established solid security guarantees. The EU's northern expansion represented differing primary objectives for Finland and Sweden. Finland sought security guarantees while political and economic assurances motivated Sweden.<sup>43</sup> According to Mauno Koivisto, then the Finnish president, "The strongest reason for seeking EC membership seemed to me to lie in the realm of security policy. The economic reasons were secondary."<sup>44</sup> The Swedish objective in membership was highlighted by Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson's desire for Sweden's improvement in "political, economic, and social terms."<sup>45</sup> Indeed, Finland's and Sweden's behavior within the EU demonstrates they have maintained their respective motives and objectives.

Security policy has remained a relevant topic in the European Union, especially for Finland and Sweden. Both countries have supported cooperation among European defense industries. These industries are not seen as threatening the standing security policies of Finland and Sweden for non-alignment.<sup>46</sup>

While cooperation involving European defense industries is welcomed, the topic of collective defense has not been accepted by Finland and Sweden. After her presidential inauguration in 2000, Finnish President Tarja Halonen boldly stated, "I do not see a need to add a mutual defense obligation to the EU's functions."<sup>47</sup> The Swedes' Solidarity Clause of 2009 has since changed this perspective by incorporating a form of collective defense into Swedish security policy.

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43 Ries, Tomas. *North Ho!: The New Nordic Security Environment and the European Union's Northern Expansion*. Sankt Augustin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 1994, 23.

44 Koivisto, Mauno. *Witness to History: The Memoirs of Mauno Koivisto President of Finland, 1982–1994*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1997, 246.

45 Hanna Ojanen, Gunilla Herolf, and Rutger Lindahl, *Non-Alignment and European Security Policy: Ambiguity at Work* (Helsinki, Finland: Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2000), 175.

46 Forsberg and Vaahtoranta, "Inside the EU, Outside NATO," 73.

47 Ibid.

#### **D. TRANSITION FROM NEUTRALITY TO NON-ALIGNMENT, SOLIDARITY, AND COLLECTIVE DEFENSE**

In the years since Halonen's election in 2000, Finland and Sweden have maintained their neutral position, while adopting further European integration. Within the EU, both countries have become contributors to the Common Security and Defense Policy and its EU Battlegroups (EU BG). Both countries have also been active in NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP).<sup>48</sup>

The evolution of Swedish defense policy is evident in Sweden's declaration of solidarity coupled with its military non-alignment. The Swedish Minister of Defense, Sten Tolgfors, as well as the Foreign Affairs Minister, Carl Bildt, have repeatedly emphasized that "Sweden would not stand passive if a neighbour is threatened or attacked."<sup>49</sup> Crisis management, international peace, and security still remain top priorities in Sweden's contribution to its international relationships. In the mutual dependence clause of their 2004 Defense Bill, the Swedes emphasized their position of non-alignment:

Sweden neither confers nor accepts mutual defence obligations. It must be considered improbable, however, that Sweden would find herself quite alone if our fundamental security interests were threatened.

For the foreseeable future a possible negative development in our region would reasonably be managed jointly. It is in Swedish interests that the European and the Euro-Atlantic structures' crisis management ability be strengthened. There is no contradiction between the development of a joint crisis management capability and Sweden's military non-alignment.<sup>50</sup>

Most observers were unfazed to see Sweden's shift toward closer joint defense with its Nordic counterparts. The collapse of the Soviet Union had significantly reduced the threat of encroachment from the east. However, Russia's post-Cold War economic

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48 Ulrika Möller and Ulf Bjereld, "From Nordic Neutrals to Post-Neutral Europeans: Differences in Finnish and Swedish Policy Transformation." *Cooperation and Conflict* 45, no. 4 (December 2010): 365, doi: 10.1177/0010836710386870.

49 Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act*, 300; Möller and Bjereld, "From Nordic Neutrals to Post-Neutral Europeans," 365.

50 Sverige, and Försvarsdepartementet. [Our Future Defence: The Focus of Swedish Defence Policy 2005–2007.] (Stockholm: Ministry of Defence, 2004), quoted in Hugemark, *Friends in Need*, 15.

and defense recovery coupled with the radical reduction in Sweden's own defense forces reignited the necessity for the 2004 Defence Bill (as it related to a dominant and aggressive Russian military force).<sup>51</sup> The Swedish defense structure, similar to that of the Finns, is built on the premise of repelling invaders. Resisting the overwhelming military force maintained by the Russians would undoubtedly require outside assistance for the Swedes and the Finns. In 2005, Swedish Defence Minister Leni Bjorklund emphasized the necessity for cohesion, rather than individuality, when fighting this type of potential threat. When asked for further clarification for her answer during the 2005 Folk och Försvar (People and Defence) national conference, Bjorklund identified the UN as the source for that type of collaborative military aid against Russia.<sup>52</sup> This statement does not seem plausible due to Russia's position as one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

Interestingly, Sweden revised its concept of solidarity in the aftermath of Bjorklund's statement. In 2008, the Swedish government announced its Declaration of Solidarity to express the extent of Swedish military support. This solidarity was expressed in two official documents: the Report of the Defence Commission, and the Defence Reform Bill.<sup>53</sup> The Report of the Defence Commission, unveiled on 13 June 2008, declared:

Sweden will not remain passive should a disaster or an attack afflict another [EU] member country or Nordic country. We expect that these countries will act in the same manner should Sweden be afflicted.

This means that Sweden can contribute military support in crisis and conflict situations. We must be able and willing to help one another in the event of accidents, crises or conflicts, with relevant capabilities. Against this background, Sweden shall have the ability both to receive and to provide military support.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Hugemark, *Friends in Need*, 15.

<sup>52</sup> Hugemark, *Friends in Need*, 15.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>54</sup> Sverige, and Försvarsdepartementet. Försvar i användning (Stockholm: Försvarsdepartementet, Regeringskansliet : Fritze, 2008), <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/10/72/64/43fda416.pdf> quoted in Hugemark, *Friends in Need*, 15.



The Defence Reform Bill of 19 March 2009 announced:

The government supports the Declaration of Solidarity presented by the Defence Committee and covering EU Member States together with Norway and Iceland. It is impossible to see military conflicts in our immediate surroundings that could affect one country alone. Sweden will not remain passive should a disaster or an attack afflict another [EU] member country or Nordic country. We expect that these countries will act in the same manner should Sweden be afflicted. Sweden should therefore be able both to give and to receive military support.<sup>55</sup>

This declaration is a significant change in the history and architecture of Swedish security policy. Sweden would now be prepared to provide and receive external support in times of conflict. The Defence Reform Bill appeared to echo the proposal by Tørdal Støttenberg, a veteran Norwegian politician, for collective defense in the Nordic region. In the February 2009 Støttenberg Report he proposed that the Nordic governments “should issue a mutual declaration in which they ‘in a binding manner make clear how they will react should a Nordic country suffer external attack or undue pressure.’”<sup>56</sup>

Hugemark notes that in this version of cooperation in defense one or more countries would specialize in “certain tasks with different but complementary roles.”<sup>57</sup> Should Finland and Sweden come under attack, they must be able to rely on each other for additional support.<sup>58</sup> The brilliance in the Støttenberg plan, some observers have argued, is that it allowed NATO’s safety net over Norway and Denmark to at least partly extend eastward over Finland and Sweden as their Nordic allies.<sup>59</sup>

The Swedish declaration of solidarity preceded the conclusion of defense agreements and security guarantees between the Nordic states and the entire European Union. The Treaty of Lisbon, which came into effect in December 2009, provided the

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<sup>55</sup> Sverige, Stödutredningen, Sverige, and Försvarsdepartementet. Ett användbart och tillgängligt försvar stödet till Försvarsmakten: rapport (Stockholm: Försvarsdepartementet, Regeringskansliet, 2009), <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/108/a/126455> quoted in Hugemark, *Friends in Need*, 15.

<sup>56</sup> Tørdal Støttenberg, “Støttenberg Report,” in Hugemark, *Friends in Need*, 62.

<sup>57</sup> Hugemark, *Friends in Need*, 63.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

greatest defense guarantee for the Nordic countries outside of NATO. Article 42.7 of the Lisbon Treaty states:

If a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. This shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States. Commitments and cooperation in this area shall be consistent with commitments under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which, for those States which are members of it, remains the foundation of their collective defence and the forum of its implementation.<sup>60</sup>

This additional defense guarantee ensures the protection of Finland and Sweden as EU member states. Is it enough? Following a 2013 Russian “fly-by” of the Swedish coastline, the Swedish defence minister, Karin Enström, recognized Sweden’s reliance on EU member states due to the defense guarantees expressed in the Lisbon Treaty. She acknowledged the disparity between Article 42.7 of the Lisbon Treaty and Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty but nevertheless stated, “If you really read it, the Lisbon Treaty says you must support your EU neighbours with all the necessary means.”<sup>61</sup>

This chapter has presented historical background concerning the security policies of Finland and Sweden to provide the reader a frame of reference for their consideration of closer cooperation with the Alliance or possible NATO membership. It has highlighted the most important historical decisions shaping the security and political landscape of these Nordic neighbors. The strategically crucial decision by Finland and Sweden to become EU members in 1995 may have been the catalyst needed to shift from the security policy of neutrality to eventual collective defense, as promised by the North Atlantic Treaty’s Article 5. Chapter III examines the potential advantages of closer cooperation with the Alliance and possible membership.

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<sup>60</sup> Article 42, par. 7 of the Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2010), 39.

<sup>61</sup> Karin Enström quoted in Yost, *NATO’s Balancing Act*, 299.

### **III. POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES OF NATO MEMBERSHIP OR CLOSER COOPERATION WITH THE ALLIANCE FOR FINLAND AND SWEDEN**

Chapter III considers the potential advantages of NATO membership or closer cooperation with the Alliance for Finland and Sweden by examining prospects for improved protection of national economic resources, collective defense of the Nordic and Baltic Sea region, and cooperative deterrence to protect their respective security interests.

#### **A. PROTECTION OF NATIONAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES TO INCLUDE ENERGY EXPLORATION AND SEA CONTROL**

The last 20 years have seen an increase in attention to energy-related issues in the Nordic region, especially concerning the scarcity of resources. Some scholars have referred to the energy security of northern Europe as a “new cold war” based on the shortage of these commodities.<sup>62</sup> This phrase is well suited to refer to the increased competition within the global economy for natural resources, particularly oil. While research continues on alternative energy sources, oil is still the most important commodity in the industrial global market economy. Two prominent German analysts, Eric Follath and Alexander Jung, referred to oil as the “lubricant of the global economy in motion.”<sup>63</sup> This is especially true in Russia’s foreign and economic policy strategy to monopolize oil exportation throughout Europe. As the European Union’s primary gas and oil provider, Russia has deliberately “taken advantage of this lack of cohesion to gain favorable energy deals and heighten European dependence on Russian supplies.”<sup>64</sup> This

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62 Bendik Solum Whist, *Nord Stream: Not Just a Pipeline* (Lysaker, Norway: Fridtjof Nansen Institute 2008), 1. Whist references the works of Follath and Jung 2006; Lucas 2008; SvD 2007; Erich and Alexander Jung (eds.) (2006). *Der neue Kalte Krieg. Kampf um die Rohstoffe*. München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt; Lucas, Edward (2008). *The New Cold War: How The Kremlin Menaces both Russia and the West* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing); SvD (2007). ‘Risk för kallt krig om gas och olja’ [Risk of Cold War over Gas and Oil]. *Svenska Dagbladet*. July 27, 2007. Available at: [www.svd.se/nyheter/utrikes/artikel\\_248467.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/utrikes/artikel_248467.svd).

63 Erich Follath, and Alexander Jung, *Der neue kalte Krieg: Kampf um die Rohstoffe*, [*The New Cold War: The Struggle for New Materials*] (Munich: Der Spiegel, 2006), 10.

64 Zeyno Baran, “EU Energy Security: Time To End Russian Leverage,” *Washington Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (September 2007): 131, doi: 10.1162/wash.2007.30.4.131

Russian strategy aims to stifle future gas and oil pipelines within European waterways that do not involve Russia.

Energy policy has to some extent replaced foreign policy for Russia as the focus in its relations with Finland and Sweden. Russia has made clear its intention to monopolize refineries and pipelines in Eastern Europe as well as in the Baltic States to maintain its status as one of the world's largest gas and oil exporters. Most analysts agree that Russia's pursuit of gas and oil is a means to extort its neighbors and wield political pressure. To counter this pressure, some observers argue, Finland and Sweden must partner with the EU and NATO to prevent Russian seizure and monopolization of Baltic and Nordic gas and oil sites. An expansion of the European Union's network of energy resources and transportation capacity would help diminish Baltic dependence on Russia as the chief supplier of gas and oil. Studies show that between 1991 and 2008 Russia cut energy transfers to EU or CIS countries over 30 times, not counting 10 separate politically motivated instances of suspension of supply to the Baltic States from 2006 to 2008.<sup>65</sup> The looming possibility and consequences of the Kremlin manipulation of oil and gas supplies to the region as a political and economic weapon should drive recognition of the need to pursue alternate energy options.

Insufficient domestic resources have caused the Swedes to rely on imported oil, gas, and coal for over half the country's gross consumption of energy.<sup>66</sup> Traditionally, Swedish crude oil imports have mostly come from Norway and Iran, yet recent reports show an increase of energy imports from Denmark and Russia.<sup>67</sup> Russia was identified as Sweden's principal supplier of heating oil in 2004. In that year, "Sweden imported 262,000m<sup>3</sup> from Russia, which was a 44% share of the total [heating oil] imports."<sup>68</sup> According to a 2012 report by the International Energy Agency (IEA), "Sweden imported 18.8 Mt [million tonnes] of crude oil, or an average of roughly 380 kb/d primarily from

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<sup>65</sup> Hugemark, *Friends in Need*, 103.

<sup>66</sup> Thomas B. Johansson, Peter Steen, Erik Bogren, and Roger Fredriksson. "Sweden Beyond Oil: The Efficient Use Of Energy," *Science Magazine* 219, no. 28 (1983): 355.

<sup>67</sup> Robert L. Larsson, "Nord Stream, Sweden and Baltic Sea Security," *Defence Analysis, Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI)* (March 2007): 66.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

Russia (50%), Norway (20%), and Denmark (15%).”<sup>69</sup> The 2012 report also noted that Sweden is “fully dependent on imports to meet domestic oil demand.”<sup>70</sup> In 2015 the Swedish Energy Agency (SEA) reported that Sweden imported 18.8 Mt of crude oil from Russia in 2014. This compared with 10 Mt from the North Sea (Denmark, Norway, and the United Kingdom).<sup>71</sup> This illustrates Sweden’s heavy dependence on Russian petroleum supplies and underscores the associated political and economic sensitivities. Also, “Russia was Finland’s leading trading partner in terms of exports and imports in 2009, and Finland relies entirely on Russia for its natural gas supplies.”<sup>72</sup> According to newer data in 2014, Russia still remains Finland’s largest import partner, representing over 83% of Finnish energy commodities. Updated from 2009 data, the 2014 report identified Germany as surpassing Russia as the Finns’ largest export partner due to a decline in Russian trade.<sup>73</sup> Nordic leaders are concerned that if the Russians decided to shut off energy exportation, their countries would not be able to sustain themselves. The Russians have on multiple occasions (for example, at Latvia’s Ventspils Nafia facility in 2003 and at Lithuania’s Mazeikiu Nafia facility in 2006) halted pipeline deliveries to the oil-dependent Baltic states.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, it is understandable that Finland and Sweden feel anxious. If the Nordic states were actually shut off from these Russian energy resources, they would probably consider making use of the “mechanisms of the EU gas directive that grants support to a single member state for up to eight weeks.”<sup>75</sup>

The construction of the Nord Stream gas pipeline continues to be a controversial Russian government project among the Western states, even though it involves a Russian

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69 “Swedish 2012 Oil and Gas Security: Emergency Response of IEA Countries Report,” International Energy Agency, (2012): 6, [https://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publications/Sweden2012\\_OSS](https://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publications/Sweden2012_OSS).

70 Ibid., 3.

71, “Energy in Sweden 2015,” Swedish Energy Agency (December 2015): 59, Figure 28, <https://www.energimyndigheten.se/globalassets/statistik/overgripande-rapporter/energy-in-sweden-till-webben.pdf>.

72 Michel, “Virtual Allies,” 3.

73 “Russia No Longer Finland’s Largest Export Partner,” Yle Uutiset, June 16, 2014, [http://yle.fi/uutiset/russia\\_no\\_longer\\_finlands\\_largest\\_export\\_partner/7300848](http://yle.fi/uutiset/russia_no_longer_finlands_largest_export_partner/7300848).

74 Baran, “EU Energy Security,” 132.

75 Ibid., 69.

partnership with the Germans. Its first line was completed in November 2011, and the second line followed just over a year later. At a staggering distance of 1,222 km from Greifswald, Germany, to Vyborg, Russia, it surpassed the 2006 Langeled pipeline from Nyhamna, Norway, to Easington, United Kingdom, as the longest sub-sea pipeline by 66 km.<sup>76</sup>

The Nord Stream controversy was partly a result of the connection between the NATO Ally Germany and the non-NATO country Russia and its passage through Sweden's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and territorial waters. The pipeline has potential security implications by creating the justification of a Russian military presence in the region to maintain safety and prevent sabotage or disruption of the pipeline operation. This could lead to political friction between Russia and the Nordic states. The controversy is also caused by Russia's ability to directly transfer gas to Western Europe while bypassing gas import-dependent countries such as Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine. The fear for these countries is that Russia could exert political pressure on them due to their high level of dependence on Russian oil and gas supplies.<sup>77</sup>

Some political actors maintain that the reason for constructing the pipeline through the Swedish EEZ rather than via the Lithuanian and Latvian EEZs was based on environmental concerns (even though passage through the Baltic EEZs would have shortened the distance by 5%).<sup>78</sup> The pipeline passes within 68 km northeast of the Swedish island of Gotland.<sup>79</sup> Although this route is more environmentally safe for the Baltic countries, the close proximity to the Swedish-controlled island of Gotland has raised concern because it serves as a strategic outpost for the Swedish military as well as hosting a fragile ecosystem already damaged by Soviet-era industrial and military waste

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<sup>76</sup> Larsson, "Nord Stream," 60.

<sup>77</sup> Stefan Lochner and David Bothe, "From Russia With Gas: An Analysis Of The Nord Stream Pipeline's Impact On The European Gas Transmission System With The TIGER-Model," *Institute of Energy Economics at the University of Cologne*, no. 07.02.(September 2007): 2.

<sup>78</sup> Larsson, "Nord Stream," 60.

<sup>79</sup> "Nord Stream FACTS: Facts About the Natural Gas Pipeline Across the Baltic Sea, Issue 3," Nord Stream, Sep 2007: 3, <https://www.nord-stream.com/press-info/library/?pk=41>.

dumping. It should be noted that in 2007 the Finns made a request for the Nord Stream pipeline to pass through the Estonian EEZ instead of the Finnish EEZ because Estonia has a less rocky seabed. The Estonian government rejected this request since it was considered “legally contradictory” to previous negotiations.<sup>80</sup> Hence, the original plan to construct the pipeline through the Gulf of Finland was carried out.

According to French columnist Laurine Benjebria, Soviet and Russian ships dumped radioactive and chemical wastes into the Baltic Sea near Gotland between 1989 and 1992.<sup>81</sup> In Benjebria’s words, “In addition to those radioactive wastes, the Swedish maritime space has to face several thousand tons of [Soviet] chemical weapons which have been thrown out in the Baltic Sea since 1945. Between 40,000 and 50,000 tons of [Soviet] chemical weapons were found in the Baltic Sea. Gotland’s environment is well-known for its wonderful fauna and flora diversity, and such waste can be dangerous for fishing, [a] major source of income of the Swedish Island.”<sup>82</sup> The close proximity of the Nord Stream gas pipeline to Gotland not only represents an environmental concern for the Swedes due to the possibility of spillage; it is also seen as an act of provocation by the Russians to increase their military presence inside the Swedish EEZ as they monitor the pipeline for “safety concerns.” Sweden and other states, including EU and NATO members, have identified the region around Gotland as an area of “vital importance for safeguarding operational freedom in the Baltic Sea area.”<sup>83</sup> Conversely, the Russians view the island as “of equally vital interest since its possession would clearly give the Russian excellent ‘flank’ protection should they wish to conduct a military operation in the Baltic States.”<sup>84</sup> Swedish foreign policy continues to convey a defensive stance on the protection of Baltic sovereign waters with the aid of a strong air force and navy. NATO

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<sup>80</sup> Whist, “Not Just a Pipeline,” 7.

<sup>81</sup> Laurine Arlandis, “Gotland Island Is Rekindling Tensions between NATO, Sweden and Russia,” *Le Journal International* (April 2015): [http://www.lejournalinternational.fr/Gotland-Island-is-rekindling-tensions-between-NATO-Sweden-and-Russia\\_a3197.html](http://www.lejournalinternational.fr/Gotland-Island-is-rekindling-tensions-between-NATO-Sweden-and-Russia_a3197.html).

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Hugemark, *Friends in Need*, 197

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

membership has the potential to further improve Sweden's defense abilities, as well as those of its Finnish neighbors.

It is likely that NATO membership would offer increased protection for Finland's and Sweden's national economic goals as well as promoting greater interdependence and bargaining power among other members of the Alliance concerning natural resources from Russia. Finnish and Swedish policy-makers may choose to begin adjusting their economic strategies to provide for sources of trade other than Russia in preparation for potential NATO membership. Russia's relations with Finland and Sweden have become increasingly frosty following the 2007 cyber attack on Estonia, the 2008 Russian conflict with Georgia, and the 2011 completion of the Nord Stream oil pipeline.<sup>85</sup> The growing fear in Finland and Sweden is that they could find themselves in the same threatening predicament that Georgia and Estonia experienced. Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 serves as the latest example of Russian aggression demonstrating the need for Finland and Sweden to consider seeking membership in the Alliance. Membership in NATO would probably help to subdue these uncertainties.

## **B. COLLECTIVE DEFENSE OF THE NORDIC AND BALTIC REGION, INCLUDING COUNTERING THREATS TO SOVEREIGNTY AND FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION**

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Sweden was eager to take a more active role as a leader in Baltic security and decision-making. This was evident in the 1996 creation of the Baltic Sea Council, a group of 12 representatives from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden, and the EU, ensuring political, economic, and social protection and assistance to the three Baltic countries.<sup>86</sup>

Sweden has maintained its philosophy of "neutrality," but it shifted its national rhetoric to "non-alignment" in the early 1990s. This terminology was intended to allow Sweden and Finland latitude in pursuing various partnerships with other European

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>86</sup> Olav F. Knudsen, *Stability and Security in the Baltic Sea Region: Russian, Nordic, and European Aspects* (London; Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1999), 140.



countries and symbolically was the first active step toward regional collective defense following the Cold War. This was made tangible when Sweden and Finland became members of the European Union in 1995. The Finnish decision to seek further cooperative defense via the EU was described by Bo Hugemark as “an entirely new course in Finnish foreign and security policy. During the Cold War foreign-political reasons—primarily mistrust of the Soviet Union and literally interpreted policy of neutrality—were obstacles to accession; but the dramatic changes of 1989 made it possible to raise the question in foreign-policy debate.”<sup>87</sup> The decision to join was not taken lightly by Finnish politicians due to a 1,300 km border with Russia and an extensive geographic separation from fellow EU members with military power in the case of conflict. The solidification of partnership through the EU became more binding for member states with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in December 2009.

This language seems less unequivocal than that in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty; it does not necessarily obligate EU members to provide military assistance when under attack, partly due to continued reliance on NATO. Hugemark points out the lack of credibility in Article 42.7 as opposed to NATO’s Article 5 for cooperative defense:

implementation of the security guarantees involved in the EU assistance clause is almost impossible to achieve without using NATO resources and structures. Of the Union’s 27 members, 21 are members of NATO and their countries have unambiguously declared that their defence is entrusted to NATO—counted as population this involves 94% of the whole EU population.<sup>88</sup>

This is disconcerting with respect to the collective defense structure of Finland and Sweden, as they are two of the six EU members that are not NATO Allies.

In 2013, Karin Enström, then the Swedish defense minister, publicly acknowledged that the protection under Article 42.7 of the Lisbon Treaty is not equivalent to the defense backing of the North Atlantic Treaty’s Article 5. She expressed her expectation of EU collective defense following a close encounter off the Swedish

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<sup>87</sup> Hugemark, *Friends in Need*, 158.

<sup>88</sup> Hugemark, *Friends in Need*, 161. Hugemark wrote before the accession of Croatia to the European Union in 2013.

coastline by two Russian bombers and four Russian fighters conducting an exercise-bombing raid against Sweden in March 2013.<sup>89</sup> Some analysts argue that the Lisbon Treaty is an expression of political solidarity rather than actual military support. In the case of a military assault against an EU member, the obligation to render assistance is subject only to the amount of military capability each individual government is willing to contribute. The unfortunate reality for countries requiring such aid is that the interpretation of the obligation is dependent on each individual EU government's assessment of its duties and responsibilities. National decisions determine contributions in NATO as well, but the Alliance's collectively funded capabilities, its long-established command structure, its proven combat record in the Balkans and South Asia, and the fact it has actually invoked Article 5 (following the 9/11 attacks in America) lend it much greater credibility than the EU in collective defense.

While the EU solidarity clause continues to be scrutinized for its security value, Sweden and Finland remain committed to further cooperative alignment. Hugemark notes a shift in Finnish sentiment regarding the country's traditional position of non-aligned neutrality in a passage in the 2009 Finnish cabinet's security policy report: "Membership of the Union is a fundamental security policy choice for Finland. As a Member State of the Union Finland belongs to a close-knit political grouping, the members of which share a strong sense of unity and the will to act in unison. Finland is strongly committed to this union."<sup>90</sup> The shift from neutrality to solidarity in the EU in the 1990s might be representative of a desire on the part of Finland and Sweden to commit resources toward collective defense and security efforts. The commitment to participate in NATO's Partnership for Peace (both countries joined on May 9, 1994) seems to represent a change from the former status of Swedish security policy goals, as outlined by Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme at the 1984 congress of the Swedish Social Democratic party: "the defense of our country's independence, our democratic social order, our right to decide

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<sup>89</sup> Yost, *NATO's Balancing Act*, 299.

<sup>90</sup> Hugemark, *Friends in Need*, 160.

our *own* future. This responsibility is best served by a firm policy of neutrality.”<sup>91</sup> New foreign policy choices by Finland and Sweden that align them with organizations for conflict prevention, conflict management, arbitration, and deterrence in Europe have transformed political, strategic, and military decision making. In 2009 the Swedish minister of defense, Sten Tolgfors, reaffirmed national sentiment of solidarity with Sweden’s fellow Nordic, Baltic, and EU partners:

Sweden shares values and interests with the EU and the Nordic and Baltic countries. One expression of this is our declaration of solidarity. Sweden would not stand passive if a neighbour is threatened or attacked. We expect others not to stand passive if Sweden is threatened. We must be able to provide and receive support, with relevant capabilities, also of a military nature.<sup>92</sup>

To aid in bolstering collective defense within the Nordic region, the Swedish and Finnish militaries agreed in October 2015 to form a Swedish Finnish Naval Task Group (SFNTG). The battle group is intended to be “a cost-effective way for the two nations to conduct joint crisis-response operations in the Arctic and the surrounding regions.”<sup>93</sup> The aggressive military behavior of the Russians in recent years has undoubtedly been a motivating factor in the formation of the group. Multiple incidents involving Russian aircraft and ships in close proximity to the Swedish coastline have also encouraged Nordic countries to improve their cooperation in intelligence sharing. When two Russian SU-24 fighter jets entered Swedish air space in September 2014, Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt declared the event “the most serious aerial incursion by the Russians” in almost a decade, according to the Swedish security service Säpo.<sup>94</sup> To combat these threats, the Finnish and Swedish navies have sought to improve cooperative battlespace management, operational Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR), and

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<sup>91</sup> Palme quoted in William J. Taylor and Paul M. Cole, *Nordic Defense: Comparative Decision Making* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1985), 128: italics in the original.

<sup>92</sup> Yost, *NATO’s Balancing Act*, 299–300.

<sup>93</sup> Jeremy Bender, “2 European Countries On The Frontline With Russia Are Starting To Merge Their Military Operations,” *Business Insider* (October 2015): <http://www.businessinsider.com/sweden-nato-finland-2015-10>.

<sup>94</sup> “Russia’s Biggest Threat to Sweden over past year,” *The Local SE*, March 18, 2015, <http://www.thelocal.se/20150318/russia-was-biggest-threat-to-sweden-last-year>.

capabilities in Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) missions. Swedish Defense Minister Peter Hultqvist announced that Sweden's navy is upgrading its fleet in order to be able to locate Russian submarines in the Baltic Sea.<sup>95</sup>

As a SFNTG and NATO PfP partners, Finland and Sweden share similar perspectives on how to deal with contemporary threats. Both countries emphasize improved security through multilateral collaboration. Finland and Sweden have highlighted the importance of the European Union as a security community and have emphasized the significance of solidarity between EU member states to prevent war on European soil. Möller and Bjereld highlight the significance of Finland's and Sweden's cooperation in the following security framework: "European integration, particularly with regard to the Baltic States, is considered advantageous in terms of security for Sweden and Finland. Both governments underscore the significance of NATO and the importance of cooperation with NATO within the framework of the PfP."<sup>96</sup>

The methodology of the SFNTG seems to follow the 2010 "Ghent Initiative" intensifying European military cooperation. In this initiative the German and Swedish ministers of defense adopted a list of priorities from the European Defense Agency (EDA) for pooling and sharing military resources among EU member states. The Council of the European Union endorsed the Ghent Initiative in 2010, encouraging all EU states to review their national security as well as "capabilities that are essential to national security and need to be maintained on the national level exclusively; capabilities that could be maintained in closer cooperation with partners without forfeiting authority over them (pooling); and capabilities that could be abolished when provided by partners instead (sharing)."<sup>97</sup> Since 2010, the EDA has taken action to develop guidelines in regard to pooling and sharing. This is annotated in the EDA's November 2010 "Code of

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95 "Russia's Biggest Threat to Sweden over past year," The Local SE,

96 Möller and Bjereld, "From Nordic neutrals to Post-Neutral Europeans," 372.

97 Patrick Keller, "Challenges for the Defence Budget after the Economic Crisis: A European View," in *Current Challenges for Disarmament and Peace Operations on the Political Agenda*, eds. Peter Fischer-Bollin and Thomas Knirsch. VII Conference on Forte de Copacabana International Security (Rio de Janeiro: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2011): 113–114.

Conduct of Pooling and Sharing,” a document endorsed by the European Council for cooperation for national defense planning by EU members.

The European Union’s defensive capacity is reliant on the security infrastructure guarantees of the European Defense Agency (EDA). Leo Michel, a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for National Strategic Studies, states that the “CSDP [Common Security Defense Policy] likely will have some beneficial effect on Europe’s ability to defend itself by facilitating intra-European cooperation on defense capabilities—notably through the European Defense Agency (EDA)—and broadening European experience in multinational operations.”<sup>98</sup> Michel continues, “During the negotiations on the Lisbon Treaty, Finland strongly supported provisions aimed at improving EU defense capabilities and crisis management mechanisms. However, Finnish officials draw a careful distinction between the EU’s modest capabilities to conduct military crisis management tasks outside EU territory and the organization’s inability to provide for the collective defense of its member states.”<sup>99</sup>

As comforting as the EDA and other EU-sponsored military cooperation activities appear, skeptics have noted the lack of an EU headquarters to support a collective defense mission. According to Michel, “many Finnish experts doubt that the EU would be able, in the foreseeable future, to muster the military capability and political will necessary to deter or defeat a potential aggressor. Their view remains essentially identical to a former Finnish official’s observation in 2005: ‘A separate European defense would be possible only if we could be completely certain that it will not be put to test in a real situation.’”<sup>100</sup> If Finland and Sweden are serious about establishing collective defense arrangements for military protection, they might consider the ambitious pursuit of NATO membership instead of relying on the EDA or CSDP to fill that security void.

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98 Michel, “Virtual Allies,” 4.

99 Ibid.

100 Ibid.

### **C. COOPERATION IN DETERRENCE TO PROTECT SECURITY INTERESTS**

Increased cooperation among NATO Allies has been a catalyst for Finnish and Swedish defense building projects to increase local security and efficiency. Shared security concerns and limited national economic resources have continued to foster closer defense and political cooperation between Finland and Sweden and the Alliance. Yet, economic constraints have not deterred the Finns from maintaining a large conscript army, despite active debate and evolution in national force structures. The structures primarily allocate defense spending toward the protection of Finnish territory and resources. Swedish politicians share an interest in protection of the coastline and have continued to develop a military posture to support this effort. Finland and Sweden have become active participants in NATO-led exercises in recent years. Especially due to the Russia-Georgia war in 2008 and the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, the Alliance and its partners have fully recognized the conceivable consequences for a non-member in wartime.

Two of the largest NATO-led exercises that Finland and Sweden participate in are Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) and the Cooperative Cyber Defense Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) exercise. The growing BALTOPS exercise now includes “a whole range of military operations—from regular combat to humanitarian aid, stabilization, reconstruction.”<sup>101</sup> The most recent June 2015 exercise, the 43<sup>rd</sup> annual BALTOPS, involved 17 participant countries (14 NATO allies as well as Finland, Georgia, and Sweden) and 5,600 total troops. It showcased anti-submarine warfare, air defense, and amphibious landings. Operations involved 49 ships, 61 aircraft, one submarine, and a combined amphibious landing force of 700 American, Finnish and Swedish troops.<sup>102</sup> The exercise has traditionally strengthened the participants’ ability to work together as they increase regional security.

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<sup>101</sup> Hugemark, *Friends in Need*, 124.

<sup>102</sup> “NATO Allies Begin Naval Exercise BALTOPS In The Baltic Sea,” NATO, June 2015, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_120407.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_120407.htm).

The annual NATO-led Cyber Coalition exercise, now comprising 28 alliance members, had its eighth anniversary in 2016. The exercise is intended to encourage a cooperative effort in thwarting simultaneous cyber attacks in a challenging cyber atmosphere for the Alliance's members and partners. The NATO website states that the exercise's goal is to "test the rapid sharing of information about cyber incidents. The drill also tests the ability of the participating nations to coordinate a defence against a series of targeted cyber incidents involving a NATO mission network."<sup>103</sup>

The CCDCOE was established in 2008 following the politically charged Russian cyber attack against Estonia in 2007. In this attack

Web defacements carrying political messages targeted websites of political parties, and government and commercial organisations suffered from different forms of denial of service or distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks. Among the targets were Estonian governmental agencies and services, schools, banks, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), as well as media channels and private websites.<sup>104</sup>

Estonia has since hosted the large assemblage of information technicians, government, and legal experts participating in the annual cyber coalition exercise.

Cyber warfare has gained attention in recent years among government and political leaders due its destructive power and its ability to exploit the vulnerabilities of national infrastructures and conventional military technologies, tactics, and procedures. Cyber warfare is defined as "an extension of policy by actions taken in cyber space by state or non-state actors that either constitute a serious threat to a nation's security or are conducted in response to a perceived threat against a nation's security."<sup>105</sup>

The term cyber-space conveys is a new operating environment that has caused some analysts to recommend revisions to allied force protection. According to Stephen Herzog, "In this period of IT-driven globalization, the attacks on Estonia demonstrate that

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<sup>103</sup> "Largest Ever NATO Cyber Defence Exercise Gets Underway," NATO, November 2014, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_114902.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_114902.htm?selectedLocale=en).

<sup>104</sup> Matthew Warren, *Case Studies in Information Warfare and Security for Researchers, Teachers, and Students, Volume 1* (United Kingdom: Ridgeway Press, 2013), 73.

<sup>105</sup> Paulo Shakarian, Jana Shakarian, and Andrew Ruef, *Introduction To Cyber-Warfare: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (Waltham, MA: Elsevier, 2013), 2.

even NATO Article 5 and U.S. nuclear umbrella guarantees cannot ensure the protection of a nation-state's sovereignty in cyberspace.”<sup>106</sup> The ability of cyber attacks to skirt hard national borders has since motivated NATO members to debate the inclusion of cyber warfare into the Article 5 collective defense agreement.

The 2014 Wales Summit Declaration included the following statement: “Cyber attacks can reach a threshold that threatens national and Euro-Atlantic prosperity, security, and stability. Their impact could be as harmful to modern societies as a conventional attack. We affirm therefore that cyber defence is part of NATO’s core task of collective defence. A decision as to when a cyber attack would lead to the invocation of Article 5 would be taken by the North Atlantic Council on a case-by-case basis.”<sup>107</sup>

Nearly two years later, the 2016 Warsaw Summit Communiqué echoed the observations made in the 2014 Wales Summit Declaration:

We agreed in Wales that cyber defence is part of NATO’s core task of collective defence. Now, in Warsaw, we reaffirm NATO’s defensive mandate, and recognise cyberspace as a domain of operations in which NATO must defend itself as effectively as it does in the air, on land, and at sea.<sup>108</sup>

Participation in the annual Cyber Coalition exercise is only one example of how the Finns and the Swedes are preparing for cyber warfare. The Swedish government has been especially interested in conducting littoral operations in the Baltic Sea with multi-sensor capabilities.

With the threat of a cyber attack, the Finns and the Swedes have also partnered in preparing for possible defense operations against hybrid warfare. Hybrid warfare is defined by Ohio State University Professor Williamson Murray as “conflict involving a combination of conventional military forces and irregulars (guerrillas, insurgents, and

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<sup>106</sup> Stephen Herzog, “Revisiting the Estonian Cyber Attacks: Digital Threats and Multinational Responses,” *Journal of Strategic Security* 4, no. 2 (2011): 56.

<sup>107</sup> Wales Summit Declaration, Par 72, NATO, September 5, 2014, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_112964.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm).

<sup>108</sup> Warsaw Summit Communiqué, Par 70, NATO, July 8–9 2016, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_133169.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm).



terrorists), which could include both state and non-state actors, aimed at achieving a common political purpose.”<sup>109</sup>

According to a published source,

TMCI [The Military Conflict Institute] decided that conducting its own TTXs [table top exercises] during semi-annual general working meetings would make a contribution to the analytical community by exploring scenarios and decisions not normally addressed in official channels. The result is TMCI’s Forbidden Options series of table-top exercises conducted at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), Institute for Littoral Warfare in Monterey, Calif., each April and at the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) in Alexandria, Va., each October.<sup>110</sup>

According to the same published source, the exercises consider “potential conflicts in the Baltic area.”<sup>111</sup>

The SFNTG is designed to combat threats like these. The battle group is intended to be “a cost-effective way for the two nations to conduct joint crisis-response operations in the Arctic and the surrounding regions.”<sup>112</sup> The SFNTG will eventually take advantage of the upgraded technology that Swedish Defense Minister Peter Hultqvist promised for his country’s fleet. Hultqvist told the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, “It’s a general fact that Russia is carrying out bigger, more complex, and in some cases more provocative and defiant, exercises. We are following that development and are now strengthening our military capability and our international cooperation.”<sup>113</sup> According to *Al Arabiya*, “In April 2015, Sweden announced plans to raise defense spending by 10.2 billion kronor (1.09 billion euros, \$1.18 billion) for 2016–2020, mostly to modernize ships to detect and intercept submarines.”<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Murray Williamson and Peter R. Mansoor, *Hybrid Warfare: Opponents from the Ancient World to the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 2.

<sup>110</sup> Douglas A. Samuelson and Russell R. Vane III, “Military Exercises: Wargamers Explore ‘Forbidden Options.’” *Informs* 42, no. 3 (June 2016): <https://www.informs.org/ORMS-Today/Public-Articles/June-Volume-42-Number-3/Military-Exercises-Wargamers-explore-forbidden-options>.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Bender, “2 European Countries.”

<sup>113</sup> Hultqvist quoted in, *El Arabiya English*, “Sweden Ups Military Over Russia Concerns,” June 26, 2015: <http://ara.tv/wc296>.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

As has been mentioned, the aggressive Russian military behavior in recent years has undoubtedly been a factor in the formation of the group. Multiple incidents involving Russian aircraft and shipping in close proximity to the Swedish and Finnish coastlines have evidently accelerated growth in Swedish and Finnish naval cooperation and intelligence sharing. The exploration of advanced command, control, communications, computing, and intelligence (C4I) capabilities such as Mesh networking and localized battlespace management have allowed the Swedish and Finnish navies to increase situational awareness of a common operational environment and to increase their Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) capability. This term is widely used in strategic analyses by military and defense leaders in Finland and Sweden.

Membership in the Alliance would increase cooperation in cyberspace, hybrid and kinetic area defense, and intelligence sharing for the Finns and the Swedes. The Finnish relationship with NATO has led military and political leaders to improve the country's defense forces. Finnish and Swedish policy makers do not, of course, follow NATO direction in force levels, personnel, or equipment, but they do recognize the need for interoperable communications and operations protocols. The Finns participate in the Alliance's Planning and Review Process (PARP), "the Partnership for Peace counterpart to NATO's process of identifying the military capabilities necessary to meet the level of ambition agreed to by the Alliance political leadership and of periodically reviewing each Ally's performance in meeting its agreed-upon force goals."<sup>115</sup> The participation in the PARP is a positive trend in improving Finnish defense abilities that increases interoperability with NATO forces. Finland's participation with 10 Allies (plus Sweden) in the Strategic Airlift Capability Initiative, deployable Chemical-Biological-Radiological (CBR) forces, NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) in 1999, and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan in 2002 all demonstrate the Finnish government's desire to further improve its force interoperability with NATO.<sup>116</sup> Since the Finns, as well as the Swedes, have been reliable partners in the Alliance in numerous NATO-led coalitions over the last 20 years, it seems reasonable for them to seek

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<sup>115</sup> Michel, "Virtual Allies," 6.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 7.

membership in the Alliance. Michel concludes, “Given the distance that Finland and Sweden already have traveled toward recasting their security policies, transforming their militaries, and establishing close ties with the Alliance, membership might seem a logical next step.”<sup>117</sup> This is a decision that Finnish and Swedish policymakers take into account in weighing the political benefits as well as the associated risks and costs.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Swedish and Finnish decisions to become members of NATO would clearly strengthen security in the Nordic region as well as the entire NATO alliance. As members they would benefit from Article 5 of the Washington Treaty: the collective defense commitment from fellow NATO members. This is widely regarded as a stronger and more reliable source of protection from foreign aggressors than Article 42.7 of the Lisbon Treaty on European Union: the solidarity clause. Any political decision to join NATO should be supported by the general population as well as by the authoritative political actors. If Finnish and Swedish policymakers eventually choose Alliance membership, they must understand that their security environment will be profoundly affected by NATO’s policies and actions. The prospect of “tandem riders” (Finland and Sweden both becoming members at the same time) would likely create a smoother transition into the Alliance’s political and military structure as well as encouraging a more cautious Russian response.<sup>118</sup> The Alliance must be patient regarding the potential inclusion of these countries as new members. NATO nations share with Finland and Sweden important security and stability interests in Europe.

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<sup>117</sup> Michel, “Virtual Allies,” 18.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 17.

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#### **IV. POTENTIAL DISADVANTAGES OF NATO MEMBERSHIP OR CLOSER COOPERATION WITH THE ALLIANCE FOR FINLAND AND SWEDEN**

Chapter IV discusses the possible *disadvantages* of NATO membership or closer cooperation for Finland and Sweden. This chapter highlights the unmistakable negative Russian sentiment toward this prospect as well as what the Russians see as adverse effects of NATO enlargement. This chapter analyzes the potential risks for Finland and Sweden in reducing economic interdependence with Russia, the cooperative security arrangements Finland and Sweden have explored to complement preexisting policies of “non-alignment,” as well as the deterrent challenges a revived Russian military may pose to Moscow’s neighbors.

##### **A. THE RISK OF NATO MEMBERSHIP**

The benefits for Finland and Sweden in pursuing NATO membership or closer cooperation with the Alliance are not accessible without considering the serious associated security risks. The opposition to such an alliance has been made clear in declarations from the Russian political elite. One might consider, for example, the threatening verbiage used in 2009 by Yuli Kvitsinsky, the vice chairman of the Duma’s Committee for International affairs: “Russia could mount a whole range of military, political, and economic countermeasures if Finland chose to join NATO...A full NATO membership by Finland may lead to a deterioration of bilateral relations...Finland should not place this relationship at risk by joining a military alliance.”<sup>119</sup> The Finns certainly have already demonstrated their ability to act as an independent player in global politics and security in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Their ability to defend their 1,340 km eastern border, as well as to establish a stable relationship with Russia, has prevented conflict or annexation.

It has become increasingly difficult in the post-Cold War era for Finland to predict the aggressive actions of its eastern neighbor. For this reason some observers have identified the strategic advantages of NATO’s security guarantee to its member states.

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<sup>119</sup> Yuli Kvitsinsky, interview on Finnish public broadcaster YLE, March 28, 2009, quoted in Yost, *NATO’s Balancing Act*, 297.

That said, Finland's policy thus far has been to maintain its autonomous defense capability without drawing close enough to NATO to trigger strong Russian responses. In his 2007 speech in Washington, Finnish Minister of Defense Jyri Häkämies identified "the three main security challenges for Finland today" as "Russia, Russia, and Russia."<sup>120</sup> His observation stemmed from the ongoing messaging from the Russian elite indicating that the Kremlin considers possible Finnish membership in NATO a military threat to Moscow.<sup>121</sup> Nordic countries—Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden—are cautious about new alliances that could upset the already fragile relations with Russia.

Holger Mölder's article on the cooperative security dilemma in the Baltic Sea region identifies the area as a "regional security complex"<sup>122</sup> within a post-modern society. This definition is borrowed from Barry Buzan's concept of a regional security complex consisting of a "group of states whose primary security concerns link together [so] that their national securities cannot be considered apart from one another."<sup>123</sup> Finland and Sweden are lukewarm to the idea of integrating new security and defense postures in regional political arrangements. The Russians clearly favor national security over any integrated cooperation even if those national security measures conflict with the security interests of contiguous regional neighbors such as Finland and Sweden.<sup>124</sup> The Finns have maintained their policy of "military non-alignment" as a mechanism to protect their territorial integrity from Russia, just as they had done during the Cold War to ensure border security in relation to the Soviet Union. Finnish and Swedish strategists have tailored their national and regional security policies to be in accordance with "non-alignment" baselines while also exploring new cooperative security options.

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120 Jyri Hakamies, CSIS Statemen's Forum Speech, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, September 6, 2007 adapted Forss, "Russian Military Thinking," 1.

121 Forss, "Russian Military Thinking," 1.

122 Holger Mölder, "The Cooperative Security Dilemma in the Baltic Sea Region," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 42, no. 2 (June 2011): 151.

123 Mölder, "The Cooperative Security Dilemma," 153, adapted from Barry Buzan, *People, States, and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (Boulder, CO: L. Rienner, 1991), 193.

124 Mölder, "The Cooperative Security Dilemma," 151.

According to Mölder, the “Nordic security complex” and “Nord-Baltic security complex” are favorable to Finland and Sweden, whereas the “Baltic Sea security complex” is specifically tailored to Russian interests.<sup>125</sup> Mölder defines each regional security complex as:

1. Nordic security complex (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden);
2. Baltic security complex (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania);
3. Nordic-Baltic security complex (Nordic and Baltic security complexes);
4. Baltic Sea security complex (includes also Germany, Poland, and Russia)<sup>126</sup>

This is not to discount the dissimilarities between the Nordic security complex and the Baltic security complex, as Mölder defines them. Mölder cites Möller in holding that these dissimilarities include differences in “common identities, values, and norms” as opposed to a “security community as a value-sharing entity.”<sup>127</sup> Möller identifies the Baltic security complex as a “security-driven entity aiming to increase the national military capabilities of its members and approaching NATO through mutual cooperation.”<sup>128</sup> This idea has driven security preferences in the Baltic and Nordic regions, particularly among the newer NATO member states in the Baltic region—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, as well as among Nordic NATO members, —Denmark and Norway.

Defense Minister Häkämies’ fears of the Russian threat were made more palpable **by** the Russian actions taken during the war with Georgia in August 2008, less than a year after his 2007 Washington speech. A month after Häkämies’ speech Dr. Vladimir Kozin, Chief Adviser and Head of the Group of Advisers to the Director, Russian Institute for Strategic Studies, gave a seminar at the Finnish Defence University. Forss noted that “[Kozin] praised Finnish-Russian relations during the Cold War and suggested

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>126</sup> Mölder, “The Cooperative Security Dilemma,” 152.

<sup>127</sup> Frank Möller, *Thinking Peaceful Change: Baltic Security Policies and Security Community Building* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 64 adapted in Mölder, “The Cooperative Security Dilemma,” 152.

<sup>128</sup> Möller, *Thinking Peaceful Change*, 11.

a strategic partnership between Finland and Russia, and military cooperation, including joint military exercises.”<sup>129</sup> In response to Kozin’s seminar, the Russian Ambassador in Helsinki immediately distanced himself from Kozin’s viewpoints. Russian Ambassador Aleksander Rumjantsev said the views expressed by Kozin were the “personal opinions of a researcher” and that they “do not represent the official view of either the Russian Federation or the leadership of the Russian Embassy.”<sup>130</sup> It was yet another indication of the uncertainty and aggressive attitude the Russians could express to Finland and Sweden.

As a former superpower yearning for resurgence, Russia has placed the emphasis of its security strategy and policy on being considered a credible and respectable force. Former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State and current President of the Brookings Institution, Strobe Talbott, commented on the Russian security character following the Russia-Georgian War of 2008:

The more authoritarian—not to mention totalitarian—Russia is, the more it tends to assert itself in an intimidating or aggressive fashion outside of its borders. Another point has always been, ... , that Russia has tended to define its security...in a zero-sum way. It has tended to feel absolutely secure only when everybody else, particularly those around its borders, feel absolutely insecure.<sup>131</sup>

The troubling threat for smaller countries adjacent to the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and at present near the Russian Federation, has been the prospect of annexation. Crimea serves as the source of this anxiety. From the viewpoint of Ulrika Möller and Ulf Bjereld, the Finns’ decision to reject opportunities for NATO membership and to remain neutral during the Cold War was calculated in order to provide diplomatic distance from the Soviet Union. “It therefore concerned an aspect of national autonomy that is linked to identity; it was an attempt to avoid the experience of being politically colonized by the Soviet Union, and it sent a message to the Western sphere that Finland

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<sup>129</sup> Vladimir Kozin quoted in Forss, “Russian Military Thinking,” 1, adapted from Keir Giles and Susanna Eskola, *Waking the Neighbour: Finland, NATO and Russia* (Shrivingham, England: Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, 2009).

<sup>130</sup> “Russia Recalls Kozin Home from Finland,” Yle Uutiset, May 24, 2012, [http://yle.fi/uutiset/russia\\_recalls\\_kozin\\_home\\_from\\_finland/5805940](http://yle.fi/uutiset/russia_recalls_kozin_home_from_finland/5805940).

<sup>131</sup> Strobe Talbott, in Forss, “Russian Military Thinking,” 3.



could not be considered an integral part of the Eastern bloc.”<sup>132</sup> The Finns’ neutrality and diplomatic distance from Russia expired with the USSR’s dissolution, allowing the Finns to become more closely associated with Western institutions, including the EU. Still, the Finns could not disregard their disadvantage of territorial contiguity with Russia in pursuing closer ties with the West as seamlessly as did their Swedish counterparts. Unlike the Swedes, the Finns could not substantially cut their defense spending with the Russians on their doorstep.<sup>133</sup> Ironically, as national defense expenditure continues to serve as a top priority for the Finnish military, it might be hypothesized that the Finns would now be more open to reaping the benefits of NATO membership than are the Swedes.

Nevertheless, this judgment is inconsistent with recent polls conducted in Finland and Sweden. According to a recent Reuters dispatch, “Sweden’s government recently said it did not intend to join the alliance, but four opposition parties want membership, with polls in the country showing that the population is also split on the matter. In Finland, however, a majority opposes the prospect. According to a recent poll by Finnish public broadcaster YLE [Finnish Broadcasting Company] only 22 percent of Finns support joining NATO, while some 55 percent are against it.”<sup>134</sup> Only time will tell if Finnish and Swedish poll findings, coupled with official policy statements, shift toward supporting membership in the Alliance.

National autonomy and alliances continue to drive the security decisions of some countries in the Nordic region. Möller and Bjereld explain Finland’s decision not to pursue stronger military protection through NATO membership as follows: “Finland’s military non-alliance is still considered an adequate alternative that upholds both territorial integrity and national autonomy toward Russia, especially when combined with a credible national defence and a transformed post-neutral European foreign policy.”<sup>135</sup>

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132 Möller and Bjereld, “From Nordic Neutrals to Post-Neutral Europeans,” 376.

133 Ibid., 377.

134 “Finland’s NATO Membership Could Put Relations with Russia at Risk —Govt Report.” RT International. April 29, 2016. <https://www.rt.com/news/341422-finland-nato-russia-relations/>.

135 Möller and Bjereld, “From Nordic Neutrals to Post-Neutral Europeans,” 378.

Russian political leaders have been especially outspoken in expressing their disapproval of NATO enlargement in the Baltic Sea region, among other areas. NATO membership for Finland would almost certainly worsen the Finns' already strained relationship with Russia. According to Möller and Bjereld, "even in the decades after the Cold War, Finland's military non-aligned position contributes to collective security through a balance between the two former blocs."<sup>136</sup>

The Finns' interest in studying the option of NATO membership has not been a secret. The Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2016 published, "The Effects of Finland's possible NATO membership: an assessment" to clarify the developing security environment in the Nordic region.<sup>137</sup>

As an unsatisfied power, Russia has made unpredictability a strategic and tactical virtue, underpinned by an impressive degree of political and military agility. Russia has adopted a revisionist stand towards the norms and principles governing the European order. It regards the Atlantic Alliance as an adversary and considers any NATO enlargement as a threat to its national security. Hence, Russia will attempt to thwart any move by Finland or Sweden to join NATO. The historical record of previous NATO enlargements, despite the fact that Finland is not viewed by Russia in the same light as Ukraine or Georgia, indicate that political and economic reactions may be strong, even harsh, notably during the transition phase. Even while stopping short of the use of force, specific counter-measures would be difficult to predict.<sup>138</sup>

According to the Finnish Security Policy 2009 Government Report, Russia is still considered "the most important factor in Finland's security environment."<sup>139</sup> The recent Russian military build up has caused some panic in areas of Europe, especially along the shared Finnish-Russian 1,340 km border. Some political statements by members of the Finnish political elite have differed from their written security policy and strategy. In

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Mats Bergquist, François Heisbourg, René Nyberg, Teija Tiilikainen, "The Effects of Finland's Possible NATO Membership: An Assessment, 2016," *Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs* (April 2016): 1–62, <http://formin.finland.fi/public/download.aspx?ID=157408&GUID={71D08E6C-3168-439F-9C31-0326D1014C26}>.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 6–7.

<sup>139</sup> "Finnish Security and Defence Policy," February 2009, [www.vnk.fi/julkaisukan-sio/2009/j11-turvallisuus-j12-sakerhets-j13-finnish/pdf/en.pdf](http://www.vnk.fi/julkaisukan-sio/2009/j11-turvallisuus-j12-sakerhets-j13-finnish/pdf/en.pdf) adapted from Michel, "Virtual Allies," 2.

April 2010, Finnish Defence Minister Jyri Häkämies dismissed “any actual military threat against Finland.”<sup>140</sup> The Defence Minister was not alone among Finnish political representatives in his intentional vagueness; the Finnish Defense Command had similarly asserted in 2008 that “Finland’s defense is not built on any specific enemy or threat.” The Command added, “the focal point in developing Finland’s defense is planning how to prevent and repel a surprise strategic strike.”<sup>141</sup> Any reasonable assessment would assume that this Finnish defense document is referring to the heavily advantaged Russian military. According to a 2008 Finnish report quoted by Leo Michel, the Russian regional quantitative advantage over Finland, even during peacetime, stands out by factors of “1.25 for troops, 3.6 for surface ships and submarines, 6.8 for armor, and 7.1 for combat aircraft.”<sup>142</sup> These numbers cannot go unnoticed by the Finnish government and its regional Nordic partners. The romanticized perception of the defense of Finland is articulated in *The Unknown Soldier*, a classic Finnish novel by Väinö Linna later adapted into a screenplay: “One Finnish soldier is a match for ten Russkies!” The response is: “Fine, all right so what about when the 11<sup>th</sup> one arrives?”<sup>143</sup> This quotation relates to the grossly outnumbered Finnish defense forces defending their border from the invading Soviet military during the bloody Winter War of 1939–1940. Now, over 70 years later the same spirit of confidence and patriotism is echoed among the Finnish populace in regard to their potential need for territorial defense against the Russians.<sup>144</sup> The Swedes’ Solidarity Declaration, as well as multilateral cooperation—promised through NORDEFECO and the EU, under article 42.7 of the Lisbon Treaty—validates these defensive assurances.

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140 Finnish Defence Minister Jyri Häkämies (speech, India Institute of Defense Studies and Analysis in New Delhi, April 27, 2010) adapted from Michel, “Virtual Allies,” 3.

141 “Facts about National Defence,” Public Information Division of Defence Command Finland 2008, available at [www.puolustusvoimat.fi/wcm/58926d804fc07da3914af7fa0e27a8ed/facts\\_about\\_national\\_defence\\_08.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT\\_TO=url&CACHEID=58926d804fc07da3914af7fa0e27a8ed](http://www.puolustusvoimat.fi/wcm/58926d804fc07da3914af7fa0e27a8ed/facts_about_national_defence_08.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url&CACHEID=58926d804fc07da3914af7fa0e27a8ed), 40 adapted from Michel, “Virtual Allies,” 3.

142 Michel, “Virtual Allies,” 3.

143 Väinö Linna, *The Unknown Soldier. A Novel* (Porvoo: W. Söderström, 1968) adapted from Giles and Eskola, “Waking the Neighbour,” 1.

144 Giles and Eskola, “Waking the Neighbour,” 1.

## **B. NORDIC ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE WITH RUSSIA**

The Finns' long history with Russia is not only rooted in political and military interactions, but is also evident in their economic exchanges. Russia served as Finland's principal trading partner for imports and exports in 2009, including Russian oil and natural gas. Dependence on Russian energy resources spurred the Finnish government to create a "Russia Action Plan" in 2009. This plan calls for extensive partnerships in trade, investment, and transportation with EU members and Nordic and Baltic States, in addition to the already smooth collaboration with Russia.<sup>145</sup> The objective of this plan is for Finland to remove the constraints of lingering Cold War relationships with the Russian government.

The term "Nordic cooperation" or "Nordic-Baltic cooperation" in most foreign policy journalism implies collaboration in defense. This term should infer a coalition of state economies. Twenty-five years following the Soviet Union's dissolution, the Nordic and Baltic states have rapidly become more politically and economically linked. Swedish banks have taken an influential role in the economies of the Baltic states. At present, the economic linkages appear to be more advanced than the defense relationships among the Baltic and Nordic countries.

In recent years, the Kremlin appears to have been tightening its grip on the Finnish economy. Following the Russian state-owned United Shipbuilding Company's purchase in October 2013 of Arctech Helsinki, a shipyard specializing in building icebreakers, some Finnish observers voiced concerns about the frightening similarities to the harsh economic conditions that the Finns experienced during the massive recession of the early 1990s.<sup>146</sup> Some Finnish citizens have become wary of the increasing Russian role in the Finnish economy as Russia and Finland increase their interdependence. According to a 2013 report from Finnish Customs, "Exports to Russia rose 1 per cent in

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<sup>145</sup> Michel, "Virtual Allies," 3.

<sup>146</sup> Richard Milne and Nordic Correspondent, "Finns Eye Growing Russian Presence With Apprehension," *Financial Times*, October 29, 2013, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/1934c268-407b-11e3-ae19-00144feabdc0.html#axzz4Etn5PjJF>.

the first seven months of this year while those to the EU dropped 4 per cent up to the end of August.”<sup>147</sup>

In 2013, Jyrki Katainen, then the Finnish Prime Minister, appeared to welcome the increasing economic ties with Russia: “I wouldn’t say they were tightening their grip,” he told the *Financial Times* at a Nordic Council meeting in Oslo. “We are very satisfied if there is more Russian investment into [sic] Finland. We need foreign investment into Finland.”<sup>148</sup> This statement by serving prime minister on economic integration with Russia may not be shared by the Finnish public as a whole.

In the social domain, the Finnish opinion of Russia contrasts with the 2014 Transatlantic Trends opinion poll that found 76% of the Swedish population “viewing Russia unfavorably.”<sup>149</sup> As for Finland, “A poll in the Tampere daily *Aamulehti* has found that 43 percent of Finns regard Russia as a security threat to Finland. That represents a big rise on the previous poll in March, when barely a quarter of Finns thought their eastern neighbour was a threat.”<sup>150</sup> Whether the Finnish population actually views Russia unfavorably might stir debate about how negative Russian sentiment concerning Finland’s policies may affect the Finnish defense structure. Economic interdependence with Russia is reason enough for Finland not to gamble on another economic recession. In 2015 *YLE* reported as follows: “Finnish exports to Russia have been declining since 2013, when Russia was still Finland’s largest trading partner. Finnish Customs reported Tuesday that exports to the eastern neighbour had fallen 35 percent in the months up to May this year compared to 2014, reflecting a shrinkage of exports in almost every sector.”<sup>151</sup>

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147 Ibid.

148 Finnish Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen comments in Milne, “Finns Eye Growing Presence with Apprehension.”

149 Mike Winnerstig, “Security Policy at Road’s End? The Roles Of Sweden and Finland In The Nordic-Baltic Defence Cooperation Process,” *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review* 12, no. 1 (December 2014): 153, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.2478/lasr-2014-0007>.

150 “Aumulehti Poll: 43% Of Finns See Russia As A Threat,” *YLE*, September 14, 2014, [http://yle.fi/uutiset/aamulehti\\_poll\\_43\\_of\\_finns\\_see\\_russia\\_as\\_a\\_threat/7470331](http://yle.fi/uutiset/aamulehti_poll_43_of_finns_see_russia_as_a_threat/7470331).

151 “Finnish Exports to Russian Down More Than 35 Percent,” *YLE*, August 25, 2015, [http://yle.fi/uutiset/finnish\\_exports\\_to\\_russia\\_down\\_more\\_than\\_35\\_percent/8251837](http://yle.fi/uutiset/finnish_exports_to_russia_down_more_than_35_percent/8251837).

The Kremlin's goal of promoting smooth relations with Finland has become increasingly more important since Finland's accession to the EU. On the Finnish side, the government has structured a foreign policy that values deepened coordination with Russia rather than allowing relations to degrade. For this reason Finland was strongly opposed to the EU's sanctions on Russia following the 2008 Russia-Georgia war. This approach is exemplified in the "EU's Northern Dimension," a joint policy developed in 1999 between the EU, Russia, Norway, and Iceland, renewed in 2006 and heavily promoted by Finland, that promotes deeper cooperation between Europe and Russia.<sup>152</sup> Alexander Stubb, then Finnish Minister of European Affairs and Foreign Trade, and a supporter of Finland's accession to NATO,<sup>153</sup> would attest to this as he had commented in Finland's 2009 "Russia Action Plan." Stubb stated in 2014, "It is in Finland's national interest to know Russia as well as possible."<sup>154</sup> In the same way, NATO favors deeper cooperation with Russia.

### C. THE UNCIVILIZED NEIGHBOR

The Russians view Finland as a stable and reliable trade partner. For example, in 2009, Yuriy Deryabin, the first ambassador of the Russian Federation to Finland, said:

Of all the countries directly on our borders—both historically and as a result of the collapse of the USSR [sic]—this is Russia's most peaceable neighbour. There are no unresolved political problems in our relations, nor danger of inter-ethnic conflict. Against the background of both existing and potential threats to the security of Russia along the perimeter of her borders, the frontier with Finland appears the most stable.<sup>155</sup>

Interestingly enough, Deryabin had been one the Soviet Union's most prominent advocates of promoting "Finlandization"—a policy of Finland abstaining from participating in Western security and economic coalitions, including NATO—during the

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<sup>152</sup> Giles and Eskola, "Waking the Neighbour," 10.

<sup>153</sup> Alexander Stubb quoted in "Aspiring Prime Minister Of Finland: "Of Course I Am Talking About NATO Membership For [Finland]," *Yle Uutiset*, April 30, 2014, [https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate\\_c?depth=1&nv=1&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=fi&tl=en&u=http://yle.fi/uutiset/paaministeriksi\\_pyrkiva\\_stubb\\_ilman\\_muuta\\_puhun\\_nato-jasenyyden\\_puolesta/7214509&usg=ALkJrhg9lZ7QJezgMr8sGVdVj4Utv0g6Nw](https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?depth=1&nv=1&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=fi&tl=en&u=http://yle.fi/uutiset/paaministeriksi_pyrkiva_stubb_ilman_muuta_puhun_nato-jasenyyden_puolesta/7214509&usg=ALkJrhg9lZ7QJezgMr8sGVdVj4Utv0g6Nw)

<sup>154</sup> Stubb quoted in Giles and Eskola, "Waking the Neighbour," 10.

<sup>155</sup> Yuriy Deryabin quoted in Giles and Eskola, "Waking the Neighbour," 8.

Cold War, following his arrival at the Soviet Embassy in Helsinki in 1966. It was during this time that Deryabin took on the pen name of “Yuri Komissarov” to express hard-liner instructions to Finland.<sup>156</sup> The different sentiment expressed in 2009 indicates that Finnish-Russian relations have significantly evolved since the end of the Cold War.

Some members of the Finnish political sector might argue that Russian has not acted as a “civilised neighbour.”<sup>157</sup> It is hard to ignore the aggressive posture the Russian military has presented to Sweden, Finland’s Nordic partner. As a NATO report indicated in February 2016, the simulated bombing run by the Russian Air Force on the eastern archipelago of Sweden in 2013 was nuclear in nature. The comment by Jens Stoltenberg, former Norwegian Prime Minister and now NATO Secretary General (SECGEN), reflected Nordic sentiment regarding the increasing threat of Russian aggression affecting the Nordic states: “As part of its comprehensive military rearmament, the extent of Russia’s military manoeuvres and exercises have reached levels not seen since the end of the Cold War.”<sup>158</sup>

Since the 2013 Russian show of force, multiple provocative actions by the Russians in the Baltic followed. In September 2014, two Russian SU-24 jets entered Swedish airspace low over the Åland Islands, requiring two Swedish JAS Gripen jets to scramble to defend Swedish territorial sovereignty.<sup>159</sup> Just a month later, a suspected sighting of a Russian submarine just 3 km from Stockholm center triggered local and international panic. Phillip Simon, the head of public affairs for the Swedish military, indicated that the Swedish armed forces received over 400 reports of submarine sightings

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<sup>156</sup> Lee Hockstader, “Russian Ambassador to Finland Sparks Furor with Diplomatic Note,” *Washington Post*, February 15, 1994, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1994/02/15/russian-ambassador-to-finland-sparks-furor-with-diplomatic-note/19da501f-db9c-4fa1-8485-3ed6a1682333/>.

<sup>157</sup> Giles and Eskola, “Waking the Neighbour,” 10.

<sup>158</sup> “Russia Carried out Practice Nuclear Strike against Sweden,” *The Local*, February 3, 2016, <http://www.thelocal.se/20160203/russia-did-practice-a-nuclear-strike-against-sweden>.

<sup>159</sup> “Svenskt Luftrum Kränkt Av Ryska Attackplan,” *Expressen*, September 18, 2014, <http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/svenskt-luftrum-krankt-av-ryska-attackplan/>.

in the days following three confirmed sightings off the coast of the capital city at Kanholmfjärden and Nämdöfjärden.<sup>160</sup>

Russian political leaders continue to challenge the accuracy of the Swedish government's statements. In an exclusive interview in April 2016 with the Swedish newspaper agency Dagens Nyheter, Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov emphasized the lack of evidence confirming the presence of Russian submarines in the 2014 incident, and even denied the recorded evidence of intercepted transmitter calls from Russian aircraft over the Swedish archipelago to the Russian territory of Kaliningrad. The Russian foreign minister has downplayed and denied every Russian act of aggression against Western coalition members in recent years while also warning Sweden to expect Russian military action in response to a Swedish decision to pursue NATO membership.<sup>161</sup>

In response to a reporter's question regarding potential counter-measures Russia might take in response to Swedish membership in NATO, Lavrov stated, "If Sweden decides to join [NATO], we don't believe for that matter the Swedes will attack us. But since the Swedish military infrastructure in that situation will be subordinate to [NATO's] high command, naturally we will take necessary technical-military measures at our northern borders, since on the other side there is a military political block that regards Russia as a threat and attempts in every way to hold her back."<sup>162</sup>

Evgeny Serebrennikov of the Russian Upper House Committee for Defense and Security echoed Lavrov's statement by asserting, "We are talking not only about some technical measures, we are talking numbers as well. Russia will increase the strength of its military forces on the northern and northwestern borders if Sweden becomes a NATO member, this also includes the North Sea Fleet."<sup>163</sup> Policy makers in Finland and Sweden

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160 "Sweden Admits Second Secret Submarine Hunt," The Local, January 11, 2015. <http://www.thelocal.se/20150111/sweden-carried-out-second-secret-submarine-hunt>.

161 "Russia Issues NATO Warning to Sweden," Dagens Nyheter, DN.SE, April 28, 2016. <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/russia-issues-nato-warning-to-sweden/>.

162 Ibid.

163 "Russia to Boost Military Force If Sweden Allies with NATO —Senator," RT International, April 29, 2016, <https://www.rt.com/politics/341330-russia-will-boost-its-military/>.



may now be giving additional credence to the Russian threats, in the not-so-distant wake of the Crimea annexation.

#### **D. DETERRENCE CHALLENGES ON NATO'S EASTERN FLANK**

The current Swedish government remains committed to the country's historical policy of non-alliance. The Swedes have, however, recently been inclined to explore a tougher foreign policy posture to counter Russia's belligerent military actions as well as its provocative political rhetoric. NATO members and partners, especially Finland and Sweden, took notice of the 2016 RAND research report concerning the lack of effective defense capacity on NATO's eastern flank. The authors of the RAND study reported that the results of their war gaming indicated an inability of the Alliance to properly defend its new Baltic members—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—in the case of a Russian invasion. In the RAND Corporation's simulations the lengthiest period it would take Russian military forces to seize two of the Baltic capitals, Tallinn and Riga, would be less than 60 hours.<sup>164</sup> From this perspective, the threat of the Russian military seizing these three former Soviet republics is conceivable, thanks in part to Russia's lasting presence in Kaliningrad. In contrast, Michael Kofman has offered an analysis of deterrence requirements consistent with the Alliance's July 2016 Warsaw Summit decisions.<sup>165</sup>

In 2016, Stephan Frühling and Guillaume Lasconjarias analyzed the current challenges that Kaliningrad poses for the Alliance. Kaliningrad and the Suwalki Gap separate Poland from the Baltic states.<sup>166</sup> Only 40 miles wide, some observers have classified the Suwalki Gap as a potential "Achilles heel"<sup>167</sup> or "chink in the armor."<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> David Shlapak and Michael Johnson, "Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank: Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics," *RAND Corporation* (2016): 1–16, doi: 10.7249/RR1253.

<sup>165</sup> Michael Kofman, "Fixing NATO Deterrence in the East Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love NATO's Crushing Defeat by Russia," *War on the Rocks* (May 2016): <http://warontherocks.com/2016/05/fixing-nato-deterrence-in-the-east-or-how-i-learned-to-stop-worrying-and-love-natos-crushing-defeat-by-russia/>.

<sup>166</sup> Stephan Frühling and Guillaume Lasconjarias, "NATO, A2/AD and the Kaliningrad Challenge," *Survival* 58, no. 2 (March 2016): 95–116. doi:10.1080/00396338.2016.1161906.

<sup>167</sup> Daria Mamont, "Polish Defense Minister: Suwalki Gap Is the Achilles Heel of Polish Defense," *Warsaw Business Journal* (May 2016): <http://wbj.pl/polish-defense-minister-suwalki-gap-is-the-achilles-heel-of-polish-defense/>.

Comparisons have been made to the “Fulda Gap,” the stretch of land deemed most likely during the Cold War for the Soviets to have launched a surprise attack with tanks rolling into West Germany. Some observers regard the Russian territory of Kaliningrad as potentially threatening to Finland and Sweden because it houses over 25,000 Russian military personnel as well as Russia’s entire Baltic fleet of at least 50 vessels, including submarines.<sup>169</sup> Luke Coffey and Daniel Kochis, foreign policy analysts at the Heritage Foundation, rightly identify the strategic importance of the Baltic islands at risk due to Russia’s Kaliningrad oblast. The presence of the S400 air defense system, with Iskander missiles capable of carrying conventional or nuclear warheads, as well as modernized runways at Chernyakhovsk and Donskoye air bases in Kaliningrad, make the Baltic states, as well as Bornholm Island (Denmark), Gotland Island (Sweden), and the Åland Islands (Finland), extremely vulnerable to a Russian attack.<sup>170</sup> In order to avoid provocation from the Russian military, some observers argue, the Finnish and Swedish governments must reinforce their political status of non-alliance and maintain their distance from NATO membership or closer cooperation with the Alliance. These observers hold that the Finns and the Swedes must not jeopardize their relations with their powerful neighbor in order to ensure that the Russians do not seize the islands of Åland and Gotland. Russian military exercises simulating the conduct of such a scenario have provided grounds for concern in Finland and Sweden.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

In an era of increased military capabilities and technological advancements, the political narrative of a country must match its actions. Finland and Sweden have chosen to repeatedly assert their position of cautious consideration of possible NATO membership or closer cooperation with the Alliance. The Kremlin might misinterpret this

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168 Tom Batchelor, “Revealed: The 40-Mile Chink in Europe’s Border Where NATO Fears Russia Could Invade,” *Express*, June 21, 2016, <http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/681989/Russia-Nato-tensions-Suwalki-Gap-new-frontier-Wests-Cold-War-Kremlin>.

169 Luke Coffey and Daniel Kochis, “The Role of Sweden and Finland in NATO’s Defense of the Baltic States,” The Heritage Foundation, April 28, 2016: <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/04/the-role-of-sweden-and-finland-in-natos-defense-of-the-baltic-states>.

170 Ibid.

ambiguous course. The Russian government appears to be intent upon reviving its international standing through the show of its improved military force. Threatening Russian rhetoric and blatantly provocative military exercises have some Western leaders on edge. The Finns and the Swedes cannot expect an exceptional degree of protection from the Alliance; their status would be similar to that of other Allies. Some Finns and Swedes hold that their closer cooperation with the Alliance should also be pursued cautiously and deliberately, recognizing the risk of provoking Russia. Neutrality and non-alliance strategies have proven useful for Finland and Sweden thus far. Some Finns and Swedes maintain that the benefits of revising their strategies would not outweigh the potential consequences.

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## V. CONCLUSION

This conclusion summarizes the principal findings concerning Finland's and Sweden's prospects for closer cooperation with the Alliance and possible membership.

Historical evidence illustrates that, since 1995, Finland and Sweden have explored enhanced security and defense cooperation options. Finland's and Sweden's decision to join the European Union simultaneously was a choice of great strategic significance, involving relationships beyond their immediate neighbors. This step demonstrated their evolution from long eras of neutrality. Finland and Sweden have devoted more attention than in the past to ensuring formal security guarantees in cooperation with Nordic partners, even to the point of developing competence in specialized tasks within the Nordic states' respective national capacities.<sup>171</sup>

The progression of Finland and Sweden in recent years in their security policies as well as in their strengthened military capacities might suggest convergence toward membership in the Alliance. One of the potential advantages of NATO membership or closer cooperation with the Alliance for Finland and Sweden would be the protection of national economic activity. Insufficient domestic resources such as oil, gas, and coal have motivated Finland and Sweden to look outside their borders for supplies. Russia has historically capitalized on its ability to supply oil and natural gas throughout Europe.

The Russian Federation has identified its ability to regulate oil and natural gas exportation as part of its national foreign and economic policy. Russia has exploited this advantage to abuse and extort its neighbors, including Finland and Sweden, through political pressure. Finland and Sweden may choose to seek refuge in the collective defense that the Alliance offers. The challenge of preventing Russian exploitation of energy resources would remain, however. The Russian Nord Stream pipeline skirts the EEZ of Sweden's island of Gotland as well as its territorial waters. According to Robert Larsson's 2006 report from the Swedish Defence Research Agency, the pipeline and its

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<sup>171</sup> Clive Archer, "The Stoltenberg Report and Nordic Security: Big Ideas, Small Steps," *Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook* (2010): 56–57.

riser “could be used as sensor platforms and by that serve intelligence purposes and give Russia a competitive intelligence edge in the Baltic Sea.”<sup>172</sup> This presents a security concern. In 2006, Mikael Odenberg, then the Swedish Minister of Defense, confirmed the accuracy of Larsson’s report: “The Russians will be able to exploit it [the pipeline] as a platform for intelligence collection. This is a problem.”<sup>173</sup> With the pipeline passing merely 68km from Gotland, the presence of the Russian military to monitor the Russian pipeline has the potential to lead to political friction between Sweden and Russia.

Another concern arises from the Russian military presence in Russia’s Kaliningrad territory, which has access to the Baltic Sea. It is not farfetched to assume that a potential Russian attack against Finland and Sweden could be staged from Kaliningrad. Membership in NATO would provide collective military aid to protect the borders of Finland and Sweden. Some observers speculate that Alliance membership could, however, antagonize the Russians and lead them to threaten or take violent action against Finland and Sweden. The Russians have insinuated as much with their outspoken rhetoric on the possibility of Finland’s and Sweden’s NATO membership.

Hostile Russian actions in nearby conflicts—the 2007 Russian cyber attack against Estonia, the 2008 Russian conflict with Georgia, and the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea—have caused Finnish and Swedish leaders to investigate options for collective defense. Russian military activities have included simulated nuclear air strikes over Swedish territory as well as encroaching Russian submarines in the waters outside Stockholm. These exercises and simulations coupled with the belligerent rhetoric from Russian President Vladimir Putin, and other prominent Russians, have stimulated Finnish and Swedish political leaders to reassess their respective national security structures. When considering Finnish and Swedish security options, some observers have highlighted the differences between the Mutual Defense Clause in Article 42.7 of the

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<sup>172</sup> Larsson, “Nord Stream,” 8.

<sup>173</sup> Mikael Odenberg quoted in Kevin McGwin, “The spy who came in with the pipeline,” *The Copenhagen Post*, November 17–23, 2006, p. G16, adapted from Fraser Cameron, “The Nord Stream Gas Pipeline Project and its Strategic Implications,” *European Parliament* (2007): 6, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2007/393274/IPOL-PETI\\_NT\(2007\)393274\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2007/393274/IPOL-PETI_NT(2007)393274_EN.pdf).

Lisbon Treaty and Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, the Alliance's collective defense clause. As non-members of NATO, Finland and Sweden are continuously reminded of their limited military prospects for aid in the case of a Russian attack on their borders. Perhaps Article 42.7 is better suited to serve as an expression of political solidarity than an effective defense pledge.

Especially for the Finns, a potential conflict with Russia is reason enough to maintain political and economic interdependence with their eastern neighbor. Finland differentiates itself from Sweden in its higher degree of economic interdependence with Russia. Various Russian politicians have reiterated the importance of Russia's close relations with Finland. Finnish interdependence with Russia may not necessarily be entirely voluntary. With a large footprint in the Finnish market, Russia has the ability to shape and undermine the Finnish economy through trade and investment. In order to protect their economic security, the Finns are forced into maintaining their neutral, non-aligned policy toward Russia. While Finnish security documents highlight the country's satisfactory relations with Russia, Finnish politicians are wary of "Finlandization" as a carry-over from the Cold War.

It may be possible for Finland to maintain good relations with Russia as an economic partner while pursuing membership in the Alliance. Nevertheless, the unpredictability of Russia cannot be ignored. Finland and Sweden must also consider the deterrence challenges on NATO's eastern flank. As a 2016 RAND report suggested, NATO's eastern flank lacks effective defense capability in the Baltic countries.<sup>174</sup> The vastly improved conventional Russian military now has the ability to seize Baltic state capitals in less than 60 hours, owing to the massive mobilization potential showcased in Russian snap exercises. Due to the geographic disadvantage provided by Russia's access to the Suwalki Gap, NATO forces would find it difficult to prevent a Russian invasion of the Baltic countries. Finnish and Swedish observers might consider the possibility of a similar scenario involving a highly complex and overwhelming Russian military presence on the borders of Finland and on the shores of the Baltic Sea. Finnish and Swedish policy

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<sup>174</sup> Shlapak and Johnson, "Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank."

makers must assess the likelihood and implications of such a scenario and consider the benefits and ramifications of potential membership in the Alliance in the case of a Russian invasion.

This thesis has underscored the potential advantages and disadvantages for Finland and Sweden in seeking NATO membership or closer cooperation with the Alliance. Helsinki and Stockholm are likely to make a decision only after considerable deliberation. One policy recommendation for Finland and Sweden, if they eventually decide to seek membership in the Alliance, is to become members simultaneously and collaboratively. Without a joint decision for NATO membership, Finland or Sweden could become geopolitically isolated and exposed.

The political, military, and social ties between Finland and Sweden are likely to remain intertwined in their respective national security policies. Practical cooperation between Finland and Sweden, recently exemplified in the establishment of the Swedish Finnish Naval Task Group (SFNTG) as one of the battlegroups set up in the context of the European Union's Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), could serve as a model for Finnish and Swedish political and military leaders to pursue cooperative defense with the Alliance. While this thesis has presented both sides of the strategic arguments for Finland and Sweden to potentially seek membership in the Alliance or closer cooperation with NATO, further research, as well as a domestic consensus among the populations in Finland and Sweden, is warranted prior to membership application.



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